

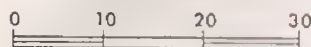
# HAITI



E R I C A N R E P U B L I C S S E R I E S

# HAITI

SCALE IN MILES



- Main Roads ———
- Unimproved Roads ———
- Roads Under Construction or Projected - - - - -
- International Boundary ———
- Department Boundaries ······
- National Capital (star in circle)
- Capitals of Departments (circle with dot)
- Railways + + + + +



# HAITI

A M E R I C A N   R E P U B L I C S   S E R I E S

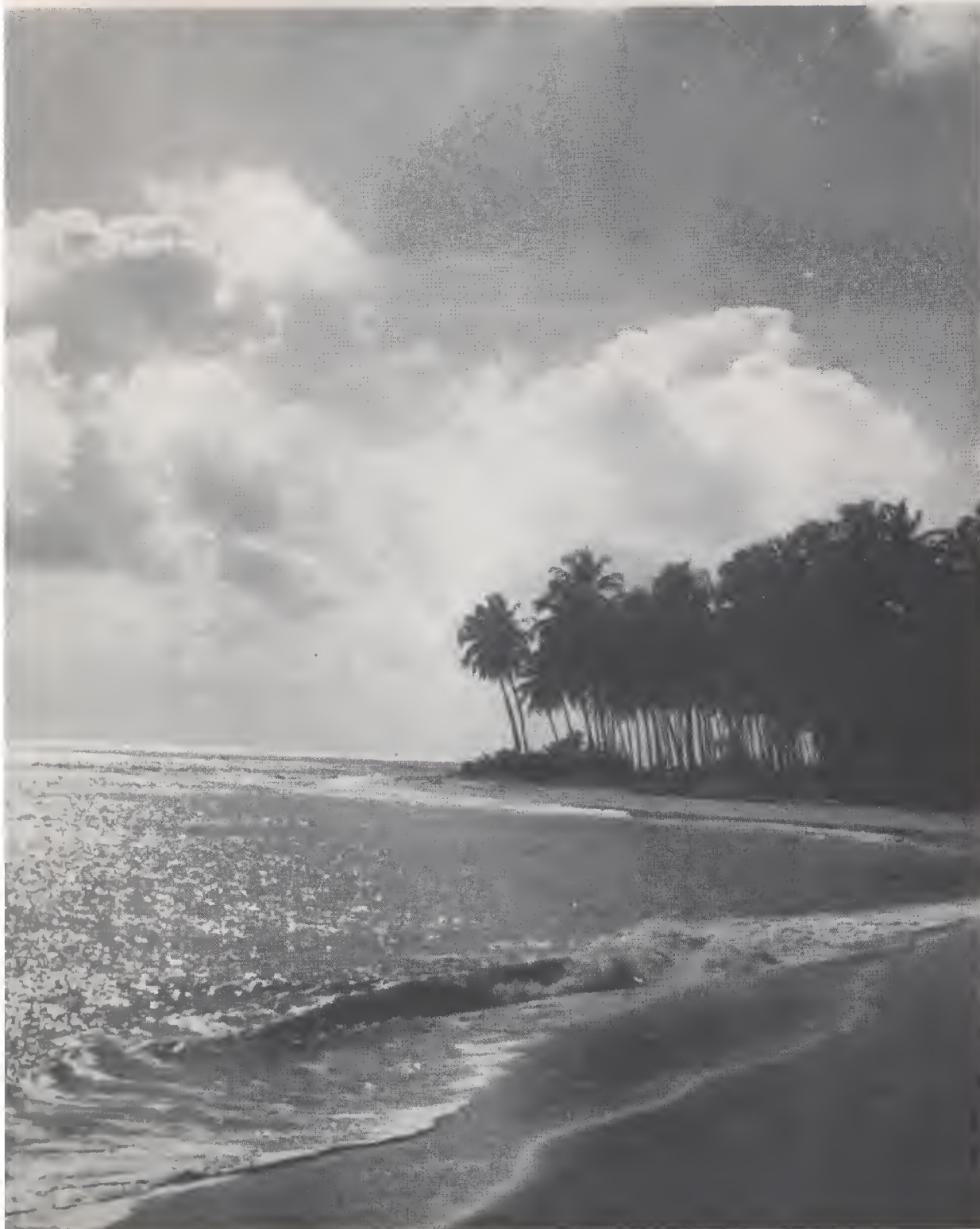
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This series is prepared under the direction of Lyn S. Manduley, Chief Publications Editor, Editorial Division, Department of Public Information, Pan American Union, Washington, D.C.

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**A typical beach scene**

Haiti's first, greatest, and most enthusiastic foreign visitor was its discoverer, Christopher Columbus. Crossing the Windward Passage after discovering Cuba, the intrepid admiral sighted another large island and on December 6, 1492—the feast day of St. Nicholas—anchored the *Santa María* in a fine harbor on its western tip, which he named in honor of the Saint. Skirting the coast, he landed some days later on what is now Haitian soil, raised a large cross, planted the standard of Castile and León, and took possession of the island in the name of the Spanish sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella. Columbus named the island La Isla Española (the Spanish Island), later to be known by its Latinized name Hispaniola.

Although disappointed that Hispaniola did not prove to be Japan or India, as he had anticipated, Columbus quickly succumbed to the beauty of the island and the friendliness of its Indian population. The natives who welcomed him with gifts of food, tobacco, and gold were of Arawak stock. They called themselves Tainos (the Good People) and their island Hayti (the Mountainous Country). Columbus described them as "gentle beings, hospitable . . . curious and merry, walking in beauty, and possessors of a spiritual religion." To Ferdinand and Isabella, he wrote ". . . In all the world I do not believe there is a better people or a better land." Thus in history and literature, Hispaniola is often called "the land Columbus loved."

When Christmas Day dawned, the *Santa María* lay wrecked on one of the treacherous coral reefs at the entrance to Acul Bay; but Columbus, undaunted, founded the first settlement in the New World on December 25, 1492, in the vicinity of what is now Cap-Haïtien and named it La Villa de la Navidad, or Town of the Nativity. Thus the loss of the *Santa María* paved the way for the founding of America's first colony, ". . . because it is certain," wrote Columbus in his journal, "that if I had not run aground here, I should have kept out to sea without anchoring at this place . . . neither would I have left people here on this voyage."

Thus began the history of Haiti and of the New World,

itself, on Hispaniola, the "Cradle of the Americas." The virgin colony of Navidad—founded by Columbus with 42 settlers and a fort built with salvage from the *Santa María*—did not survive. On his return a year later, Columbus found the fortress in ruins and the colonists slain.

The first settlement to endure permanently was Santo Domingo, founded in the eastern portion of Hispaniola in 1496 by Columbus' brother Bartholomew. After experiencing many changes in name, this ancient city is once again called Santo Domingo and is the capital of the Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island.

During its long and turbulent history—first as a colony of Spain and then of France—Haiti gained the distinction of being the first Latin American country to achieve its independence and, likewise, the world's first Negro republic. It is the only American republic in which French is the official language.

5

Second smallest of the American republics, Haiti occupies an area of 10,714 square miles, about the size of New Jersey. The waters of the Atlantic bathe the country's northern coast, and the Caribbean Sea, its southern shore. Two mountainous peninsulas stretch westward like a giant pair of tongs, partially enclosing the Gulf of Gonâve. Across the Windward Passage, some fifty miles to the northwest, lies Cuba. Miami is only 900 miles distant.

The landscape of this tropical, sun-drenched country faithfully portrays a favorite Haitian proverb: "Beyond the mountains are more mountains." Pocketed in the jumbled mass of mountains are fertile plains and deep valleys, their slopes patch-quilted by hundreds of little farms. Coffee plantations spread over the moist foothills, and the lowlands are green with seas of sugar cane. Vivid hibiscus, poinsettias, begonias, and fuchsia accent the landscape.

Roughly 80 per cent of Haiti's topography is mountainous. Dominating the landscape are three mountain ranges, the principal one being the Cordillera Central or Cibao Mountains, which extend through the northern





Panorama of Port-au-Prince

peninsula. In this range the mountains rise 8,000 to 9,000 feet above sea level. The extensive Central Plateau lies directly south. The southern range consists of two main mountain groups: La Selle in the south-eastern region and La Hotte, which forms the backbone of Haiti's southern peninsula. A deep geological depression known as the Cul de Sac lies between the southern and central ranges, extending from the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince into the Dominican Republic. This semiarid lowland contains several lakes, including the country's largest one Etang Saumâtre.

North of the Central Cordillera, between the mountains and the sea, lies the Plaine du Nord; and extending eastward from the Gulf of Gonâve into the mountains is the wedge-shaped Artibonite Lowland.

Most of Haiti's numerous rivers are short, rapid streams that flow down the mountain slopes to the sea, with the exception of the Artibonite, the country's longest river, which flows through the rich agricultural valley of the same name and supplies water for irrigating rice, sugar cane, and other crops.

Haiti's location, varied topography, and rainfall account for the wide range of climatic conditions and vegetation. In general, temperatures are high in the coastal areas, particularly in Port-au-Prince in August, and become progressively cooler as the elevation in the mountainous region increases. The annual average temperature is 81° F. in the western portion of the country and 76° F. in the elevated interior. Sea breezes temper the heat, but also increase the aridity in areas of light rainfall and rapid evaporation, particularly in the Cul de Sac and Artibonite Valley.

In addition to its profusion of beautiful flowers, palms, and plants, Haiti has a wealth of timber in the forested mountains, including mahogany, pine, and logwood. Coffee and cacao thrive in the moist foothills; bananas are raised on the irrigated plains, and cotton on the semi-arid plateaus. Rainfall, which is highly variable in different regions of the country, normally comes in two seasons: April through June, and October through November.

#### Port-au-Prince

In 1749, when France's colony of Saint-Domingue was fast becoming one of the richest colonial possessions in the world, the city which is now capital of the Haitian Republic was founded by M. de la Caze, who named it l'Hôpital. After being renamed several times, the city's present name—taken, it is believed, from that of a French ship (Le Prince) which anchored in the harbor around 1700—was permanently restored.

Many travelers are reminded of the Bay of Naples or the French Riviera as they approach the Haitian capital





Port-au-Prince Stadium

from the west. Silhouetted against a crescent of wooded mountains, the shining white city faces the emerald-cobalt Gulf of Gonâve, partially enclosed by the two great peninsulas—one reaching westward toward Cuba, and the other toward Jamaica. Guarding the entrance to the harbor is the lovely wooded island of Gonâve.

The city is laid out in the form of an irregular triangle, with its northern apex at the end of the luxuriant Cul-de-Sac plain. Facing west along the waterfront is the older section, given over to shipping and commercial activity, and adjoining it are the beautiful grounds of the Bi-Centennial Exposition. The eastern and northeastern residential sections spread over the foothills of Gros Morne. To the southwest, another residential section climbs upward from the bay over the steeper slopes of Morne l'Hôpital.

Three landmarks stand out above the canopy of green trees which shade the tin roofs typical of the city: the

spired white basilica of Notre Dame, the imposing National Palace, and the Iron Market with its four Moorish-style turrets. The large square, Place des Heros de l'Indépendance (formerly Champs-de-Mars), is the center of civic, cultural, and social life in the capital. In this area are the National Palace, the Dessalines Barracks, the Palaces of Finance and Justice, the Police Headquarters, the General Hospital, the Museum of Ethnology, the Port-au-Princien Club, the Rex Theatre, and several hotels.

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the independence of Haiti, four new statues of her heroes—Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion—were placed in the park in 1954, overlooking the spacious lawns and promenades where Port-au-Princiens stroll in the evening or congregate to listen to band concerts. In this same park, in 1848, the coronation of Soulouque as Emperor Faustin I took place.

Adjacent to the Place des Heros is another square

named for Toussaint Louverture, in honor of the noble figure who was the precursor of Haitian independence. On the west side of the National Palace, set amid beautiful gardens of tropical flowers, is the mausoleum in which rest the remains of the two men who forged the nation: Alexandre Sabes Pétion and Jean Jacques Dessalines.

8 Two earthquakes and a score of devastating fires have left little of the original French colonial city. As in many other tropical cities, especially in those having a large low-income population like Port-au-Prince, there are flimsy structures which contrast with the handsome public buildings and fine residences of upper-class Haitians. Although the present trend is toward modern design, the prevailing architectural style is French. The most notable examples are the National Palace and the Palace of Justice. The former is a replica of the Petit Palais on the Champs Elysées and is the Haitian "White House" (open to the public). Its sweeping marble staircase leads to spacious salons hung with tapestries and to the hall containing the busts of all former presidents of the republic. Another impressive public building, and one of the oldest, is the Palace of the Ministries.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame, completed during the present century, contrasts with the old French colonial cathedral, dating from 1720, which stands beside it on Rue des Fronts Forts. The Iron Market (on Grand Rue, north of the cathedral) was so-named because it was constructed entirely of sheet iron in the style of French markets. The musical patois punctuated with lively bickering, gay laughter, and the crowing of roosters fills this vast emporium, which occupies two square blocks near the water front. Spread before you is the varied produce of the fertile Cul-de-Sac plain. Even more tempting to tourists is the array of native handicrafts.

A gay and charming corner of the city is the Place de Sainte-Anne, located in one of the oldest quarters of the capital, west of the Place des Heros. The quaint church of Sainte-Anne faces the flower-filled square. Several blocks north of the square, on Rue du Centre, is the Bibliothèque National (National Library). Place

Geffrard, near the water front, is the heart of the business section. Facing the bay is Parc d'Italie, flanked by the Custom House, Municipal Palace, and the old French quay constructed in 1780.

In Preparation for Haiti's International Exposition, held in 1949, some sixty acres of land along the water front were improved and beautifully landscaped. Attractive buildings and pavilions, designed by New York and Haitian architects, constitute a permanent civic center.

The cultural life of the capital centers around the University of Haiti and several outstanding art centers and theaters. The Centre d'Art provides Haitians from all walks of life with an opportunity to express their talents in the folk arts, sculpture, and painting. Here and at the newer art center, Foyer des Arts Plastiques, one may see interesting examples of contemporary Haitian art. The Théâtre de Verduze is one of the capital's outstanding attractions. In this modern open-air theater, dancers and drummers from all over Haiti perform regularly. Their repertoire includes the best Haitian folklore. The Théâtre also produces plays in French and Creole and presents visiting artists.

Upper-class Haitians and foreign residents live comfortably, often luxuriously, in delightful French villas or modernistic homes, surrounded by the lush tropical verdure of the hills above the city. The Montjolie section is favored by United States residents, as well as the suburb of Pétionville. The National Museum, located at Montjolie, contains one of the most highly-prized historic relics in the New World—the tall iron anchor of Columbus' flagship *Santa María*. Other treasures on display in the Museum are the swords of Dessalines, the diamond crown of Faustin I, and the portraits of Christophe (King Henry I) and Toussaint Louverture. Social life, apart from private entertaining at home, centers in a number of private clubs including the Cercle Bellevue and Club Port-au-Princien, both exclusive Haitian clubs, and the Pétionville Club, which has a large membership among United States residents. The American Club, on the road to Pétionville, has a swimming pool, tennis courts, and a golf course. For dining, dancing, and entertainment there are



**A view of  
Port-au-Prince  
from the suburbs**





A luminous musical fountain on the Bicentennial Exposition grounds

10

numerous night clubs, such as the Casino Internationale and Pétionville's unique Cabane Choucoun.

In addition to tennis, swimming, and golf, there are two very popular spectator sports—soccer and cockfighting. Soccer matches are played in Leconte Park. Cockfights take place regularly on Saturdays and Sundays in the *gaguère* (cockpit) in the Exposition Park, but the most spirited ones are to be seen in rural areas outside the capital. Spearfishing enthusiasts may arrange to take trips in a glass-bottomed boat and observation goggles are provided for viewing the exotic submarine gardens.

Although most of the hotels in and near Port-au-Prince are small, they offer a wide choice of superb scenery and atmosphere. In the cool, hilly suburbs of the city are the quaint Hotel Oloffson, the Splendid—once the private estate of a wealthy sugar planter—and the newer modern Castelhaiti. Fronting on the sparkling bay of Gonâve are the Hotel Riviera, the Beau Rivage, the Simbi, and the International Club, among others; the last-named provides luxurious hotel accommodations and cottages on its 42 acres of tropical grounds located on the coastal road. All are a short drive from the center of the capital.

#### The Southeastern Highlands

Within a radius of 60 miles southeast of the capital, the Haitian highlands rise to an altitude of roughly 7,000 feet above sea level. This is an area of spectacular scenic beauty, magnificent panoramic views, and exotic

#### The Southeastern Highlands

flora and fauna. In a leisurely one-day trip by car, one may visit the delightful residential and resort area which takes in the suburb of Pétionville, the valley so appropriately named Canapé-Verte, and the mountain resorts of La Boule, Kenscoff, and Furcy.

Driving up the winding road to Pétionville, you will see thatched-roofed native *cailles* tucked into the hill-sides, with mango and papaya trees clustered about them. Patches of scarlet poinsettias, growing wild, line the roadside; they are at their best from October to February. Above the galaxy of palms, tamarind, juniper and breadfruit trees, towers the majestic flamboyant, tall as an oak and ablaze with crimson blossoms. Known also as the poinciana, it is a superb sight in June. A French poet, struck by Pétionville's rare geographical setting, described it as "the town at the foot of the mountains, with its head crowned with flowers like a lovely, coquettish maiden who dreams of love by the side of the high road."

Named for the founder of the republic, Pétionville has long been the favorite suburb of aristocratic Haitians, diplomats, and foreign residents who prefer to live outside the capital in luxurious mansions or less pretentious homes of modern design. The sumptuous estate Manoir des Lauriers is one of the show places of the town. On the main square are located the night club Cabane Choucoun (choucoun being the word for a typical Haitian belle) and a luxurious hotel of the same name. As the country's most famous night club, the Cabane Choucoun is a favorite Saturday-night rendezvous of Port-au-Prince society. De' luxe hotels and inns, many with swimming pools—such as El Rancho, Montana, and Ibo Lélé—command a sweeping view of the capital, the Bay of Gonâve, and the mountains to the east and south. This view is unsurpassed at the restaurant "Le Perchoir" in Boutilliers, at an altitude of about 3,000 feet and a fifteen minutes' drive from Pétionville.

Higher by 2,000 feet is the fashionable year-round resort Kenscoff. Deep pine forests add variety to the landscape of this natural health resort. The ruins of old forts are remainders of past battles. Beyond Kenscoff is Furcy, another popular resort, at 6,000 feet above



sea level. To the east rises the cloud-flecked range of La Selle; below are the cool wooded mountains; and to the south lies the placid Caribbean.

A trip by car from Port-au-Prince across the Cul-de-Sac plain to Lake Etang Saumâtre and Haiti's famous Pine Forest introduces foreign visitors to a region of great economic importance and contrasting scenery. Ever since the days of the Spanish and French planters, the Cul-de-Sac has been one of the richest agricultural regions of the country. Here, in the colonial era, slavery had its sinister beginnings and reached barbaric excesses. Today, it is hard to realize that this benign, productive countryside was ravaged and despoiled, both by the slaves and their masters, in the struggle for human freedom precipitated by the French Revolution. The vast estates on which French planters lived in splendor disappeared with the end of French colonial rule and, due to President Pétion's policy of liberal land grants, Haiti became a country of thousands of small farms.

The tall towers of Haiti's largest sugar refinery rise above a sea of green cane fields in the district of Chancellerie. The village of Damien is important as the seat of the National Agricultural School, one of the most important institutions in shaping the country's agricultural economy. Its grounds are like a vast botanical garden, filled with fascinating tropical plants.

Upon reaching the town of Croix-des-Bouquets, on the river of the same name, you are in the heart of the mountain-rimmed Cul-de-Sac plain. Long an important marketing center for cotton, sugar, indigo, and coffee, Croix-des-Bouquets was also a strategic point during the struggle for independence and headquarters of the *affranchis* (freedmen). Here the signal was given for the uprising of the slaves of the southern peninsula.

At Fond Parisien the road divides, the left fork following the southern shore of Lake Etang Saumâtre situated in a sparsely inhabited, arid region. This lake, believed to have risen from the sea because of the shells and coral on its beaches, covers an area of about 40 square miles. Its brackish waters support fish, ducks, egrets, and crocodiles.

The Forêt des Pins (Pine Forest) is reached by taking the southern fork of the road from Fond Parisien. Between the desert and the forest lies the exuberant valley of Fond Verettes. Its lush vegetation harbors a rare and tiny songbird, the *musicien*, famed for its three flute-like notes. Soon the road begins to climb the mountain range of Morne des Commissaires, where Haiti's highest peak Morne de la Selle rises 8,793 feet high. The landscape and climate change as one approaches the Pine Forest, said to be the most beautiful one in the Caribbean area. Located at an altitude of approximately 7,000 feet above sea level, this virgin forest

Twin spires of the Cathedral of Port-au-Prince







Partial view of Port-au-Prince Harbor



spreads over an area of 150,000 acres. Giant tree ferns, wild strawberries, and cherry and mahogany trees are found among the pines. Flocks of green parrots flash through this vast unspoiled woodland.

#### The Southern Peninsula

Haiti flings her rugged southern arm westward 150 miles from Port-au-Prince into the Caribbean toward Jamaica. Off the beaten track of tourism, the southern peninsula abounds in unspoiled natural beauty, as well as historic associations. The principal cities on the northern coast, facing the Gulf of Gonâve, are Léogane, Petit-Goâve, Miragoâne, and Jérémie. On the Caribbean side are the ports Jacmel and Les Cayes. The South Peninsula Highway runs from the capital to Miragoâne and branch roads cross the peninsula to the Caribbean ports.

If the road from the capital to Jacmel is in good condition, a trip by car (60 miles) is an interesting experience. It takes one through the sun-drenched Léogane plain, one of Haiti's most important sugar-producing regions, to the Caribbean. Léogane, on the Gulf of Gonâve, is the principal city and port of the sugar-growing section. It was built on the site of the ancient Indian village of Yaguana, where, according to legend, the beloved Indian Queen Anacaona ruled the domain of her husband, Caonabo, after he had been sent in irons to Spain for having united his people against the Spanish invaders. The famous grotto named for her may be visited by making an hour's trip on horseback to a spot of wild virgin beauty outside the town.

The historic port of Jacmel is dramatically situated in an amphitheatre of mountains which rise from a horseshoe bay of the Caribbean. Long ago, this port was a rendezvous for buccaneers, and was seized and held by Spanish and British forces at different times. In 1806, its citizens gave hospitality and aid to Francisco de Miranda—the great Venezuelan who was a precursor of the independence movement in South America. Perhaps the most beautiful of the white-sand beaches, fringed with graceful cocoanut palms, is the one of Carrefour Raymond, 10 miles from Jacmel. Off the beaten path are the exquisite Blue Lakes (les

Bassins Bleus), cradled in nearby mountain glens overhung with giant bayahondes, gum trees, and acacias.

According to an old creole legend the Blue Lakes are peopled by water nymphs, and tales are told of the goddess of the waters, in the form of a lovely dusky maiden, who sits on a famous rock beside the Palm Lake combing her long golden tresses by the light of the moon. At the approach of indiscreet mortals, she slips into the water and disappears; and, it is said, anyone lucky enough to discover her comb will instantly become rich. Bassin Palmiste takes its name from gigantic palms which surround it, and in which myriads of birds called *oiseaux palmistes* have their nests.

The port city of Les Cayes, also on the Caribbean, is capital of the Department of the South and third city of the country. One can still see the ancient arsenal on the Place Royale and several forts along the sea wall, which defended the port from many attacks. In 1815, Simón Bolívar and other Venezuelan exiles were given a hearty welcome at this port. President Pétion generously aided the cause of South American independence by providing General Bolívar with arms and provisions, with the assurance that the latter would abolish slavery in all the provinces he might liberate. After freeing Venezuela, Bolívar sent President Pétion his beautiful gold sword as a token of his gratitude.

From Les Cayes a mountain road crosses the peninsula to Jérémie. En route is the popular summer resort Camp Perrin, known for its delightful climate; it is the point from which to visit (by horseback) Haiti's most beautiful waterfall Source Mathurin. Jérémie, founded in 1756, is called the "City of Poets" and is famed as the birthplace of Alexandre Davy Dumas, father of the great French novelist and dramatist. The city climbs upward from the sea in a mountainous amphitheatre. Large shipments of coffee, cacao, and logwood are exported from the Basse Ville (Lower City). The Haute Ville (Upper City) is picturesque with its quaint houses painted pastel pink and green.

#### The Heart of Haiti

Between Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien on the Atlantic, the mountain ranges enclose the three principal

valleys that contain the bulk of the Haitian population and produce the major food and export crops: the Cul-de-Sac, the Artibonite, and the Cibao valleys. The principal cities, Mirebelais, Hinche, and Dondon, are located on a partially all-weather road (bad in the rainy season) connecting the capital with Cap-Haïtien, a distance of about 175 miles.

Mirebelais, 35 miles from the capital, is interesting as the locale of the fascinating ethnological study of peasant life made by Professor Melville J. Herskovits and described in his book *Life in a Haitian Valley*. South of Mirebelais, on a branch road, is the town of Saut d'Eau, scene of a great religious festival held annually on July 15 to honor the Virgin of the Palms. This event, a moving manifestation of Catholicism combined with voodoo rites, takes place at three sacred spots: St. John, En Bas Palmes, and the waterfall of Saut d'Eau.

14

The town of Lascahobas lies in a fertile agricultural region, surrounded by coffee plantations and mahogany forests. To the north is the Central Plateau, consisting largely of savannas covered with grass. Cattle-raising is the chief activity in this region and the city of Hinche is the center of the cattle industry. Of special interest to visitors are the caves of the Zinc Basin (Grottes du Bassin Zim), reached by a short drive from the city. In these ancient caves one can still see curious Indian pictographs antedating Columbus' discovery of Hispaniola. The Bassin Zim waterfall, one of the most beautiful in Haiti, pours its waters into a deep pool said to be bottomless.

Beyond the Central Plateau, the road passes through an important coffee and banana region to the mountain town of Dondon, famous for its vast system of caves, the Grottes du Dondon. One of the most interesting is the Voûte à Minguet, named for a French naturalist, but from pre-Columbian times the sacred cave of Haiti. Here in a vast cathedral-like sanctuary the chieftains met for the celebration of the autumn equinox. According to legend, the first man, Louquo, appeared from a great natural chimney at one end, after falling from heaven. In like manner, according



A small resort in the highlands

to ancient beliefs, the Sun and the Moon came forth to illuminate the world. Another famous cave (in Dondon itself) is the Voûte des Dames (Ladies' Vault), so called because of two stalagmites which suggest feminine forms.

Farther north in the mountains is Grande-Rivière-du-Nord, birthplace of the national hero Jean Jacques Dessalines and of the martyr Chavannes. This town early became the center of the independence movement. A side road goes to Milot, where famed Sans-Souci Palace is located.



## Cap-Haïtien

Northern Haiti and Cap-Haïtien, in particular, present an interesting contrast to the South in historical associations, cultural heritage, and impressive landmarks of the most dramatic and tragic periods of Haitian history. Cap-Haïtien (called simply Le Cap by local residents) is the principal city of the north and the country's second in size and commercial importance.

Today's travelers, who arrive at Cap-Haïtien by ship or plane over the Atlantic, view the same magnificent panorama of ocean, mountains, and plains that Columbus so eloquently described in these words from his diary: "the high and rocky mountains on either side of the harbor rose from among noble forests and swept down into luxuriant plains and cultivated fields, and the rich and smiling valley between the two mountains ran far into the interior." You may follow Columbus' course in the *Santa Maria* past Point Picolet, which guards the entrance to Cap-Haïtien's harbor, as he prepared to spend his first Christmas in the New World. On the fringe of coral reefs, where you can see the waves breaking, the *Santa Maria* met her fate on Christmas Eve. Her anchor was discovered later on the banks of the Grande-Rivière-du-Nord, which flows into the bay at Sable Point.

On the sandy beach which stretches from Sable Point to the tiny fishing village of Bord-de-Mer, Columbus established the first white settlement in America. Although there is no marker to designate the exact location of Fort Nativity, it has been placed within half-a-mile of the Church of Saint Philomena in Bord-de-Mer, according to the eminent authority Dr. Samuel Eliot Morison, who in 1939 followed Columbus' course along Haiti's Atlantic coastline.

During the early seventeenth century the turtle-shaped island, named Tortuga by Columbus, became the refuge and rendezvous of adventurers and pirates. From this island, which the French called Ile de la Tortue, a group of French buccaneers came to the mainland of Hispaniola and founded Cap Français (later to be re-named Cap-Haïtien) in 1670. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Le Cap had become France's

wealthiest colonial capital and Saint-Domingue was counted the richest colonial possession in the world. The exuberantly productive Plaine-du-Nord and the Artibonite Valley supplied half of Europe with sugar and cocoa. On their vast plantations of cotton, indigo, sugar, cacao, and coffee, cultivated by countless slaves, French Creole planters lived like kings. Their display of wealth on sojourns in Paris gave rise to the expression "as rich as a Creole."

Then came the French Revolution. Overnight the "Paris of the Antilles" became a stage alike for heroic events and for barbaric excesses in the struggle for human liberty. The old French fountain, which still stands in the Place d'Armes, was a silent witness to the execution of Haiti's first martyrs: the mulatto Lacombe, hanged for daring to present a petition claiming the "Rights of Man" for his countrymen; Ogé and Chavannes, barbarously put to death for demanding the political rights of the *affranchis*.

One stormy night, in the forest of Bois Caiman outside Le Cap, three Negro leaders met in 1791 to plan the rebellion of the slaves, taking the "oath of blood." A week later, to the ominous beat of native drums, their followers descended from the mountains and swept through the Plaine-du-Nord with fire and sword, avenging the deaths of Ogé and Chavannes and of untold numbers of slaves during three agonizing centuries of bondage. In a week's time they had reduced the luxuriant plain to one vast cemetery and had destroyed 600 coffee plantations, 200 sugar refineries, and the fine mansions of their owners. Merciless retaliation was meted out to rebels and non-rebels alike by the French.

A decade later Toussaint Louverture, who was born a slave on the Bréda plantation near Le Cap, became Governor General of the colony for life. Napoleon Bonaparte, determined to crush the man who had dared usurp France's prerogatives, sent to Le Cap the greatest military and naval expedition that had ever crossed the Atlantic. It was commanded by Napoleon's brother-in-law General Leclerc, who brought his wife Pauline and 45,000 of France's seasoned troops. In February 1802, while General Leclerc prepared to besiege Le

Cap, Henri Christophe burned the city. Only 59 buildings survived the conflagration. But the French gained control of Le Cap and much of the colony, restored slavery, and abducted Toussaint, who died in France. This united the Haitians irrevocably against France, whose forces were being slowly decimated by yellow fever, to which General Leclerc succumbed.

Le Cap was France's last stronghold to capitulate to the Haitians (November 1803). Among the reminders of this incredible period of death and destruction are the ruins of an old French fort on Point Picolet and the remains of Pauline Leclerc's sumptuous palace where, in a regal Louis XV setting, Napoleon's beautiful and flirtatious sister held lavish court while France was losing its richest colony and the lives of 40,000 Frenchmen. The name of the city was changed from Cap Français to Cap-Haïtien by its liberator Jean Jacques Dessalines, after he proclaimed the independence of French Saint-Domingue.

16

But Le Cap's days of pomp and splendor were not over. Here Dessalines was crowned first Emperor of Haiti in 1804, and seven years later in a far more dazzling ceremony, Henri Christophe had himself proclaimed King Henri I. He changed the name of the city to Cap Henri, created a fantastic nobility, and hastened the completion of Sans-Souci Palace and the Citadelle.

Haiti's most historic city has long since lapsed into a pleasant, placid tempo, as if still resting from its turbulent past. Pastel-tinted houses, quaint with their balconies and ginger-bread trimmings, bask in the warm sun and salt breezes. Dating from the colonial period are the Centennial Cathedral, the Justinien Hospital, and several old French fountains. Along Le Cap's picturesque waterfront freighters load coffee and sisal at the modern wharfs.

### Sans-Souci Palace and the Citadelle

King Henri Christophe, who inspired Eugene O'Neil's *Emperor Jones*, left the Haitian people two seemingly indestructible monuments to his reign that are without counterpart in the Western Hemisphere. One is his royal palace Sans-Souci and the other, the stupendous

fortress called la Citadelle Laferrière. Probably no two other structures in America have so much fascination for tourists and world travelers as these. They are reached by taking a side road from Le Cap to the village of Milot, a distance of about 20 miles. Here the majestic ruins of San-Souci rise against a backdrop of verdure-draped mountains. Above and behind the palace on a rocky promontory is the massive Citadelle; it is reached on horseback through a narrow pass, a trip of about an hour and a half.

Sans-Souci, the most magnificent of Christophe's nine royal palaces and eight châteaux, has been called the most regal structure ever raised in the New World. Visitors who ascend the sweeping staircase and pass through the roofless chambers that were once sumptuous banquet halls and ballrooms, furnished with costly French imports, can imagine, perhaps, the spectacular grandeur in which King Henri lived—and died. Like the leading character in an incredible melodrama, the King ended his own life with a silver bullet in Sans-Souci, as his people rose in wrath against him.

Like a grim Cyclops, the Citadelle Laferrière dominates land, sea, and sky, situated at an altitude of more than 3,000 feet atop the peak called Bonnet à l'Evêque (Bishop's Bonnet). Conceived by Christophe, it was begun in 1804 and designed to be an impregnable stronghold against possible attempts by Napoleon to reconquer Haiti. Over the same mountain trail that travelers take to reach the Citadelle, an army of conscripted former slaves dragged tons of masonry, 365 weighty bronze cannon, and a huge supply of cannon balls. It is said that in the construction of the Citadelle, 20,000 out of 200,000 laborers lost their lives.

On the last lap of the trail, the visitor suddenly finds himself in the shadow of the mighty Citadelle, gazing in wonderment at a masterpiece of architecture and engineering, and not a sprawling conglomeration of masonry. Like the prow of a ship, its great bastions sweep gracefully upward from the rocky summit; its walls are 140 feet high. Terraced stonework and symmetrical battlements add beauty to this symbol of strength, which has withstood earthquakes and the





The Citadelle Laferrière, called  
"eighth wonder of the world"

elements for over a century and a quarter. The walls are twelve feet thick at their base and taper to six at the top. The upper court of the fortress is open to the sun and swept by breezes from the Atlantic. It was in the center of this court that the body of Christophe was dumped into a vat of quicklime to keep it from the mob, after the fatal shot. A simple mausoleum marks the spot.

#### The Northern Peninsula

Port-de-Paix, chief city and port of the northern peninsula and capital of the Department of the West, is situated on the Atlantic at the end of a beautiful valley traversed by the Trois Rivières. This was Columbus' Vale of Paradise, named Valle del Paraíso by him. At the mouth of the river where the Discoverer anchored the *Santa María*, French buccaneers from Tortuga Island founded a refuge from the British and Spanish

in 1664 and named it Port-de-Paix (Port of Peace). Oldest city in the republic, it became the seat of the first French garrison and was for a time the capital of the colony. It was here, in 1679, that the first insurrection of the slaves took place.

Port-de-Paix has a fine port, which is the principal outlet for the bananas, coffee, and cacao produced on the peninsula. Like Le Cap, it is more picturesque than modern, with its pastel-tinted houses and ruins of colonial forts. The barren western end of the peninsula has no towns of any size or importance, except for the historical association of Môle Saint-Nicolas with the arrival of Columbus in Haitian waters in 1492. Here he anchored in the deep natural harbor, which still bears the name he gave it.

The chief city and port on the southern side of the peninsula is historic Gonaïves, known as the birthplace of the nation because it was here, on January 1, 1804, that Dessalines formally proclaimed independence, abolished forever the French colonial name Saint-Domingue, and restored the original Indian name Hayti. Capital of the Artibonite Department, Gonaïves is the chief outlet for the products of the rich plain that extends south to St. Marc.

The picturesque town of Ennery, east of Gonaïves on the road to Le Cap, lies in a mountain-rimmed valley of rare beauty. Here one of General Toussaint's favorite plantations was located. There is a superb view at the highest point in the divide between the valleys of Ennery and Plaisance. To the west lies the great horse-shoe bay of Gonaïves and to the north, the rolling Atlantic breaks on the shores of the peninsula. The Eden-like valley of Plaisance is, as its French name implies, truly a pleasure to behold. Famous for its giant ferns and waving plumes of bamboo, it is also fragrant with orange and coffee blossoms; great mango and mahogany trees tower above the verdure.

The Artibonite Plain was a major theatre of Dessalines' operations against the French. On a bluff behind the town of Petite-Rivière-de-l'Artibonite one may see the fort Crête-a-Pierrot, scene of Dessalines' heroic stand against Leclerc's veteran troops, who ultimately won the



The regal ruins of Sans-Souci Palace

18

bloody battle. On the same road is one of the best preserved of Christophe's provincial headquarters, the Palace of 300 Doors; it was restored and made into a school during the present century.

St. Marc, second city of the French colony, still preserves some of the ancient buildings of the colonial period. The town's chief attraction is its beautiful miniature white-sand beach. St. Marc is an important center for handling and exporting the cotton, coffee, bananas, sugar, cacao, and rice of the Artibonite Plain. Local industry consists of cotton mills, oil-extraction plants, and lard and soap factories.

#### Ile de la Tortue

Facing Port-de-Paix and separated from the mainland by a 10-mile-wide channel of the Atlantic, is the island that early became notorious in the history of the Spanish Main, and from which came Haiti's first permanent settlers. Here, during the first half of the seventeenth century, an odd assortment of adventurers and sea rovers—mostly Norman French and some English-

men—took refuge after being driven from the island of St. Christopher by the Spaniards. They were joined by Dutch refugees, and for some years all lived harmoniously together, cultivating crops and hunting wild boar and cattle. From their custom of curing meat over fires on spits or grills called *boucans*, they became known as *boucaniers*, the origin of the English word "buccaneer." To combat the persistent attacks of the Spaniards, they banded together in a society known as "Brethren of the Coast," and the more aggressive ones engaged in piracy against Spanish shipping.

When England, France, and Holland challenged Spain's trade monopoly by permitting privateers to attack her treasure-laden galleons, the island became a hideout and base for freebooters. Hispaniola occupied a strategic position in the Spanish Main, for ships laden with goods for the colonial trade called at Santo Domingo, on the southeastern shore of the island, and returned to Spain laden with gold and silver from the conquered Aztec and Inca Empires. For almost two centuries Spain maintained a convoy system to protect her galleons.



In 1641 French refugees, driven from the island by the English, founded Port Margot, the first settlement on the western end of Haiti. The destruction of Port Margot by the Spaniards led to the founding of Port-de-Paix, after the French recaptured their island base. Near Palmiste, in the highland region, one may see the ruins of the palace built for Pauline Bonaparte Leclerc, so that she and her court might escape the ravages of malaria and yellow fever on the mainland. In addition to her palace, the fortifications, hospital, barracks, and other buildings were destroyed when the insurgents revolted against the French. Today, Ile de la Tortue is fairly well populated and extensively farmed. Fishing is the chief activity along the coast.

### Historical and Political Development

After Columbus' unsuccessful attempt to found a permanent colony at Fort Nativity, he explored the northern coast of what is now the Dominican Republic. Discovery of gold in the riverbeds of this region was a compelling reason for the establishment of Spain's first permanent colony in the New World in the eastern portion of Hispaniola. In their frenzied search for gold, the Spaniards overran the island, unmercifully slaughtering or enslaving the defenseless Arawak Indians, whom Columbus had previously described as "lovable, tractable, peaceable and praiseworthy." Fifteen hundred Indian slaves were shipped to Spain, but the majority died en route. Thousands of natives fled to the mountains, while others took casava poison. Fifty years after the discovery and subjugation of Hispaniola, its native population of around 300,000 had been reduced to fewer than 500, according to historians.

So horrified was Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas by the barbarities committed against the Indians, that he prevailed upon the Spanish Crown to permit the importation of African slaves, believing that they would be better able to withstand the treatment of the Spanish colonizers. In 1512, the first Africans were imported, chiefly to work the gold mines of Santo Domingo, the official name given the colony by Spain. Because the eastern half of the island was the center of Spanish

operations, the western portion (Hayti) was virtually deserted and ignored for more than a century.

In the contest among the Spaniards, French, Dutch and English for colonial possessions in the New World, Hispaniola became one of the most coveted prizes in the Caribbean. Although the Spaniards were firmly entrenched in Santo Domingo and controlled two thirds of the island, they failed to prevent the French from gaining a strong foothold in Hayti by way of Tortuga Island. France's claim to this region was recognized in 1697 in the Treaty of Ryswick, by which Spain ceded Hayti to France.

During the next hundred years French Saint-Domingue was France's most prosperous overseas possession, thanks principally to the cultivation of sugar cane and the importation of a million Negro slaves during the century. It has been estimated that the annual import and export trade of the colony amounted to the fabulous sum of \$140,000,000, exceeding that of the thirteen British colonies of North America.

### The Struggle for Independence

How the Haitians survived three centuries of bloody conquest, cruel enslavement, and fratricidal warfare to create the world's first independent Negro republic and the second sovereign nation in the New World, is an epic story of human endurance and the unconquerable will of a people to gain freedom. Prior to their own struggle for independence, many Haitians fought under George Washington to free the American colonies from British rule. Among some 800 volunteers who fought in the siege of Savannah were Beauvais, Chavannes, Christophe, and Rigaud, destined soon to become leaders of the Haitian insurrection. This was precipitated in 1789 by the French Revolution, which further sharpened the conflict of interests among the colony's three distinct social classes: the white aristocracy, numbering about 36,000; the 28,000 *affranchis* (freedmen), the majority of whom were mulattoes; and approximately half a million Negro slaves.

The white aristocrats, who administered the affairs of

the colony in addition to their wealth-producing plantations, wanted nothing less than complete political freedom for Saint-Domingue, without interference from the National Assembly in Paris. The freedmen, who were full French citizens by virtue of Louis XIV's Code Noir of 1685, with all rights including the ownership of slaves, sought guarantees for their individual liberties. On March 8, 1790, France decreed political and civil rights for free taxpayers in the colonies. But the whites, who for years had been nullifying the provisions of the Code Noir, refused to apply this decree in Saint-Domingue. In protest, two mulatto leaders, Vincent Ogé and Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, organized a demonstration at Le Cap; the colonial police retaliated by seizing them and breaking them on the wheel.

Then came the revolt of the Negro slaves, followed by a proclamation of the abolition of slavery by the French colonial commissioner Sonthonax, who exceeded his authority. This prompted Rigaud, the able mulatto leader, to break with the Negroes, thus creating three warring factions, a situation that both the English, established on the end of the northern peninsula, and the Spaniards of Santo Domingo sought to take advantage of.

At this critical juncture, Toussaint Louverture came to the fore. This remarkable figure, an ex-slave and former stable-boy who was self-educated and had learned French, won recognition from his enemies for his intelligence, and fanatical devotion from his followers for his courage and iron will. Toussaint joined forces with the Spaniards after the outbreak of war between Spain and France in 1793, and raised an army of 4,000 men. But after the abolition of slavery, he shifted his allegiance to France and carried on a military campaign that practically eliminated the English. Made Lieutenant-Governor by Sonthonax, Toussaint then forced him to leave for France and assumed complete control of the North. By defeating Rigaud and the mulattoes who controlled the South, Toussaint consolidated the whole of the French colony and brought the entire island under his sway by subjugating Spanish Santo Domingo. Spain ceded Santo



**Toussaint Louverture,**  
precursor of Haitian independence



## The Republican Period

Domingo to France by the Treaty of Bâle in 1795.

With great skill, Toussaint managed to restore a large measure of prosperity to the island, to heal the wounds of racial conflict, and to create a foundation for self-government under the Constitution of May 9, 1801, which was drawn up by seven whites and three mulattoes. Under its terms Toussaint became Governor General of the colony for life. By this time the French Revolution had run its course and Napoleon Bonaparte was in full command. In his grand design for building a New World Empire, Haiti was to be a stepping-stone for the invasion of the southern United States adjoining France's Louisiana Territory. Saint-Domingue was formally established as a province of France by the Constitution approved in July 1801.

Although Toussaint was the precursor of Haitian independence, he did not sever the political ties of Saint-Domingue with the Mother Country by the act of secession. Nevertheless, Napoleon mistrusted the motives of the "gilded African," as he called Toussaint, and sent the Leclerc expedition to put him in his place. In the complete fiasco that followed, Napoleon's dream of an American empire was dashed forever. Toussaint stood by his pledge, made in a secret commercial treaty with the United States, not to engage in hostile acts against that country. In 1803, the same year in which the French capitulated to Dessalines, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory. Toussaint, by this time, was dying in a dungeon in France.

The final victory of the Haitians came after Dessalines and his Negro generals joined forces with the mulattoes of the South, led by Pétion. Yellow fever, mortal foe of the French expedition, was a major factor in the outcome of the struggle. On November 18, 1803, the Haitians decisively defeated the French Army under General Rochambeau, who succeeded Leclerc, at Vertières near Le Cap, and the French General surrendered his sword to an English admiral aboard his flagship in the harbor.

The Republican Period

The United States was only twenty years old when



**Jean Jacques Dessalines,  
liberator and national hero**

Haiti became independent, marking the first successful revolt against European colonial rule in Latin America. Dessalines was Haiti's first chief of state and assumed the title of emperor in September 1805, in imitation of Napoleon. By ruling with an iron hand and severely punishing those who disobeyed him, Dessalines restored order, made the vast plantations the property of the state, and restored a substantial degree of prosperity. His political enemies and the hard-driven masses resented his tyrannical methods and he was assassinated from ambush in October 1806.

In an attempt to establish a republic, a constituent assembly rewrote the Constitution, strictly limiting the powers of the president. Henri Christophe, who refused to accept the presidency on these terms, precipitated a struggle for power between himself and the mulatto general Pétion. As a result, the new nation was divided: Christophe ruled the North as a kingdom, after having himself crowned King Henry I, while Pétion governed the South as a republic. Both were determined to raise the standard of living of their people by extending education, distributing public lands, restoring prosperity, and moderating the antagonism between the Negroes and mulattoes. A revolt returned the eastern part of the island to Spanish rule in 1809.

It was not until after General Jean Pierre Boyer became president in 1818 and after Christophe's suicide in 1820 that the nation was united politically. President Boyer, like Pétion, was a cultured mulatto who strengthened the constitutional structure of the republic by promulgating legal codes based on French legislation. During his presidency, which lasted 25 years, he gained French recognition of Haitian independence and incorporated Spanish Santo Domingo within the national territory by taking advantage of a revolt against Spanish rule. The entire island remained under Haitian authority for 20 years until, in 1844, the annexed portion revolted and became the Dominican Republic.

From 1849 to 1859, a former slave, Faustin Souloque, ruled the second empire of Haiti as Faustin I. A revolution ended his dictatorship and General Fabre Geffrard became president. His able administration

initiated many reforms, but in 1867 he resigned after a revolt against him. Twenty different presidents headed the government from Geffrard's time to 1915. Outstanding among them were Louis-Félicité Lysius Salomon, who founded the National Bank, reorganized secondary education, and instituted other reforms; and Florvil Hyppolite, who established the Ministry of Public Works, introduced the telephone and telegraph systems, and built numerous markets and bridges. Other presidents followed each other in rapid succession in a period marked by bitter clashes between Negroes and mulattoes, by political corruption, and the violent overthrow or assassination of chiefs-of-state.

At the outbreak of World War I, Haiti's chaotic political and economic condition placed it in a highly vulnerable position, since European countries that had loaned huge sums of money to the various Haitian governments were tempted to collect the debts by force. To make matters even worse, the country was in the grips of a wave of terrorism that reached a tragic climax in July 1915, when President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam was barbarously put to death. At this point, a detachment of United States Marines landed and assumed temporary authority.

The military occupation of Haiti by the United States was formalized by a treaty of ten years' duration, later renewed for another ten years. Under its terms, the United States collected customs, advised the treasury, organized a police force (nucleus of the present Armée d'Haïti), and directed public works, health programs, and agricultural development projects. By 1930, the country was on a stable financial footing. Peace was restored after the final defeat in 1918 of the cacos—peasants and bandits from the mountains, who formed guerrilla bands and terrorized the country. The Haitian people, naturally resentful of the United States occupation, eagerly desired the restoration of their national sovereignty.

The first step in this direction was taken by President Herbert Hoover, who appointed a commission that worked with responsible Haitian leaders for the holding of a free election in 1930. Stenio Vincent was elected



president, and during his administration the marines were withdrawn from Haiti (1934) by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. President Vincent was succeeded in office by another able mulatto Elie Lescot, who governed until 1946 when a military coup forced him to resign. The country was governed by a junta until a constituent assembly, representing a coalition of political groups, elected Dumarsais Estimé as president. In 1950, when President Estimé sought to change the Constitution in order to permit his own re-election, the proposed amendment was rejected and a military junta forced him into exile.

The traditional rivalry between the Negro leaders and the so-called élite ruling caste of mulattoes once more threatened the political stability of the country. However, the junta resolved this particular crisis by adopting a policy of national unity and supporting the powerful and well-educated Negro leader Major Paul Magloire for the presidency. It is significant that Major Magloire was the first president to be elected by the direct vote of the people in the history of Haiti. Dr. François Duvalier became president in 1957.

Haiti's constitutional development since independence has been influenced by the French legal codes and by the Constitution of the United States, which served as a model for many Latin American nations in establishing a republican form of government. Haitian Constitutions were frequently abolished or amended, according to the desires of the president or party in power. The Constitution now in effect was promulgated in December 1957. It declares Haiti to be a republic—"indivisible, sovereign, independent, and democratic." The powers of state are divided into three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The executive power is exercised by the president of the republic, who is elected for a term of six years by direct popular suffrage and by majority vote. He is ineligible for immediate re-election. A cabinet of five or more secretaries assists the president.

The national legislature, *Chambre Legislative*, is a unicameral body composed of 67 deputies who are elected by a majority vote for a six-year term. The judicial

branch of the government consists of the Court of Cassation, similar to the United States Supreme Court; courts of appeal; civil and justice-of-the-peace courts. Judges of the Court of Cassation and courts of appeal serve for ten years, and those of the lower courts for seven. They may not be removed unless they are impeached.

As to citizenship, civil liberties, and suffrage, the Constitution declares all Haitians to be equal before the law; grants suffrage and political rights to all Haitians regardless of sex, who are 21 years of age (under certain constitutional and legal conditions); provides for freedom of the press, worship, and thought; prohibits the death penalty for political offenses other than treason; and stipulates that the state shall provide free public instruction through the secondary level. Naturalized Haitians gain political rights five years after their naturalization. The Constitution guarantees to both citizens and resident aliens the right to hold private property. However, in the case of aliens or foreign companies, this right ceases within two years of the date on which the alien leaves Haiti and, in the latter case, upon termination of a company's operation.

The main political subdivisions of Haiti are nine departments, named as follows: the North, Northeast, Northwest, Artibonite, Central, West, Southeast, South, and Grande Anse. Each is headed by a prefect appointed directly by the president of the republic. The departments are subdivided into *arrondissements*. There is no legislative assembly elected by popular vote in either case. However, there is a Council of the Prefecture, composed of prefects, municipal magistrates, commissioners of the central government, and school and other public officials. The *communes*, or municipalities into which the *arrondissements* are divided, are autonomous and have communal councils whose members are elected for a four-year term.

The Armée d'Haïti (National Guard) functions as both police force and militia; the president of the republic, who is its commander-in-chief, appoints the officers. The Army has an air force, which operates an air reconnaissance and transport service within the country.



A Haitian carnival queen

24

Since 1949, the United States has supplied air and naval missions for the training of personnel. The Coast Guard mans the Haitian Navy's five vessels.

### Culture and Customs

Haiti's unique cultural heritage—a blend of French and African traditions and customs with a dash of Indian and Spanish—accounts for the tremendous interest of social scientists and devotees of the arts in present-day Haitian culture. For the same reason, many travelers and tourists find Haiti fascinating and totally different from all the other American republics. The Haitian people have created, rather than adopted, their own cultural life, whose attainments are reflected in the works of outstanding painters, writers, and intellectuals.

### The Haitian People

Roughly 90 per cent of Haiti's population of more than 3,500,000 is pure Negro and the remainder, mulatto of French ascendancy, with a small minority of whites.

The original Negro slaves, from whom the majority of Haitians are descended, were taken from numerous African tribes, including such brave, proud tribes as the Ibos and Wolofs, distinguished by their physical prowess and resourcefulness. The present population also shows

## CULTURE AND CUSTOMS

### The Haitian People Life in Haiti

the effect of almost three centuries of intermarriage and interbreeding among the Negroes and white French colonists. Haitians with Indian features are few in number, as are those with traces of Spanish in their features and language.

Almost three centuries of slavery, followed by the bitter rivalry for political and social dominance between mulattoes and Negroes, explains the class distinctions that still exist. These have long been expressed by the terms "élite" and "peasantry." Generally speaking, the term élite signifies the mulattoes of the upper class and, in times past, the ruling class. This cultured minority includes many Paris-educated Haitians, whose French is impeccable; the prosperous and wealthy; and artists, writers, intellectuals, lawyers, and diplomats. At the opposite end of the scale are the peasants who, taken as a whole, are pure Negroes. They inhabit the rural areas, farm the land, and perform manual labor. The Haitian peasant is a person of simple dignity, good-humored, and happy, despite his poverty.

To these two seemingly rigid classifications, there are notable exceptions. The caste structure of Haitian society is changing as the worth of individuals of the two traditional classes asserts itself. There is a growing middle class of scholars, intellectuals, professional people, and merchants, the latter including Syrians, Lebanese, Corsicans, and other nationalities.

### Life in Haiti

Living conditions in Haiti are greatly influenced by the fact that the country is overpopulated and has the highest population density in the Western Hemisphere. Roughly 85 per cent of the population is rural and engaged in agriculture.

If one were to judge Haitian life solely by the statistics on illiteracy, per capita income, and sanitation facilities, the picture would be a very gloomy one; for the masses lack most of the things that are considered essential to maintaining good living standards today. Although poor in worldly goods, the peasants have their own priceless possessions, which sustain them in a truly remarkable way. Perhaps the most important of



these is their philosophical nature—their will to live, to laugh, to sing, to be carefree. To the descendants of slaves, freedom and a plot of land are priceless indeed. Their simple, modest existence is enlivened by the *coumbites*, or work bees, in which neighbors help each other with a sowing or harvest; and by the *bamboches*, or festivities, that come after work.

Suffusing the lives of the peasants with a spiritual element quite beyond the comprehension of foreigners is the ancient African cult of *vaudou* (voodoo), with its mysterious rituals, symbols, music, and dances. Voodoo exists side by side with Catholicism, the official religion of the country, as manifested on July 15, when thousands of Haitians attend the great Catholic festival at the foot of the beautiful waterfall, Saut d'Eau, which serves simultaneously for voodoo baptismal rites.

Another element that binds the peasants together is their native Creole language, a rich patois full of proverbs, which evolved from the dialect of the African slaves, the island's indigenous Indian tongue, the Norman French of the buccaneers, and the language of the French colonists. Although the official language of Haiti is French, almost everyone speaks Creole.

The living standards and social life of the *élite* are much the same as those of the cultured, prosperous aristocracy of any other country, with one exception: French influence dominates upper-class tastes in literature, education, fashions, and cuisine. One hears the purest French spoken in business, professional, and government circles; and in the perfectly appointed homes and clubs of cultured Haitians, whose reputation for hospitality and charm is unsurpassed.

#### Education

One of the major handicaps that Haiti inherited from the French colonial era was widespread illiteracy resulting from the total lack of an educational system. The French planters, not noted for culture themselves, had no interest in providing schools for anyone. Those who wanted to educate their own children procured French tutors or sent their sons to Paris for schooling. Thus, the Haitians had to start from scratch, so to speak, in

establishing a school system after independence. Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer made determined efforts in this direction; however, it was not until Geffrard became president in 1875 that a serious attempt was made to extend education beyond the ranks of the *élite*.

Although the present illiteracy rate is high and school attendance low, definite progress has been made in overcoming the obstacles to public education. The Constitution stipulates that primary education is compulsory and that primary and secondary education shall be free to everyone. Technical and vocational training is being extended; likewise, adult education. The University of Haiti was established by the national government in 1944.

The Secretary of State for National Education exercises administrative control over the urban school system, while the Secretary of State for Agriculture administers the rural school system. There are two inspectors of education for each of the 24 school districts into which the country is divided. In addition to financing the public schools, the national government also supports in whole or in part various private and parochial schools, many of which are operated by the Catholic Church and Protestant Missions. The Ministry of Labor supervises workers' education for illiterate adults. There has been a substantial increase during the last decade in the number of vocational training institutions and commercial schools.

There are two concepts of education in Haiti, which to some extent tend to deter efforts to unify the educational system. The urban schools modeled on the French pattern, aim to eradicate illiteracy and to provide a classical course of study; while the rural schools, following the American influence, attempt to determine the pupil's needs in everyday life and effectively integrate the school program with the community's needs. Also, attempts are being made successfully to break down the barrier between the Creole-speaking peasantry and the French-speaking minority. Instruction in the primary schools, at least in the first grade, is now generally given first in Creole, then in French. Secondary schools are no longer entirely academic or classical, but have

a wider range of studies. Their graduates acquit themselves creditably in American colleges and universities, as they have done for years in France.

Haitian primary schools, which in 1960 numbered 1,239, provide a six-year course of elementary studies leading to the *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires*. There are also several *primaires superieures*, or primary schools which include complementary courses. Rural primary schools differ from urban ones in that they operate on the practical principle of training children to learn by doing. In addition to the three R's, rural schools emphasize preparation—in the case of boys—for entry into agricultural schools. Illiteracy and low school attendance in rural areas are difficult to combat, due to the fact that peasant families have traditionally depended on school-age children for help in making a livelihood and due to lack of transportation between schools and remote areas. Secondary schools are practically non-existent outside of urban sections.

26

Progress in reducing illiteracy among the peasants is being made slowly but surely by the Haitian Government, with the help of international agencies such as UNESCO. The government's campaign against illiteracy, launched in 1943, was supplemented some years later by the pilot project undertaken by UNESCO at Marbial, a rural region having a high percentage of illiterates; and by the technical assistance agreement between the United States and Haiti, which re-established the *Ecole Normale Rurale* (Rural Normal School) in 1954.

Despite serious handicaps, the Haitian peasant has proved to be an eager student and the parents, as well as the children, strive hard to learn. A case in point is that of Sineus Hippolyte, once an illiterate peasant, who has written a number of plays of didactic and moral character since taking courses in adult education. The government's Division of Agricultural Extension supplements basic "book-learning" with practical training in improved methods of raising and marketing agricultural products, soil conservation and other essential techniques. Free seeds and plants are provided as widely as possible and better community living standards are demonstrated.

Secondary education, limited almost exclusively to urban areas, consists of a seven-year program of study in the *lycées*, most of which are coeducational schools. Public and private secondary schools numbered 63 in 1960. Both classical and modern courses are offered.

The faculties of the University of Haiti and the schools or institutes affiliated with it include the College of Medicine, the College of Dentistry, the School of Nursing, the School of Pharmacy, the College of Law, the National School of Agriculture, the Grand Séminaire Notre Dame designed to train native Catholic priests, the Institute of Ethnology, the School of Surveying, the Polytechnic Institute, and the Superior Normal School for teachers in secondary schools. Law schools are established in the cities of Cap-Haïtien, Les Cayes, Jérémie and Gonaïves.

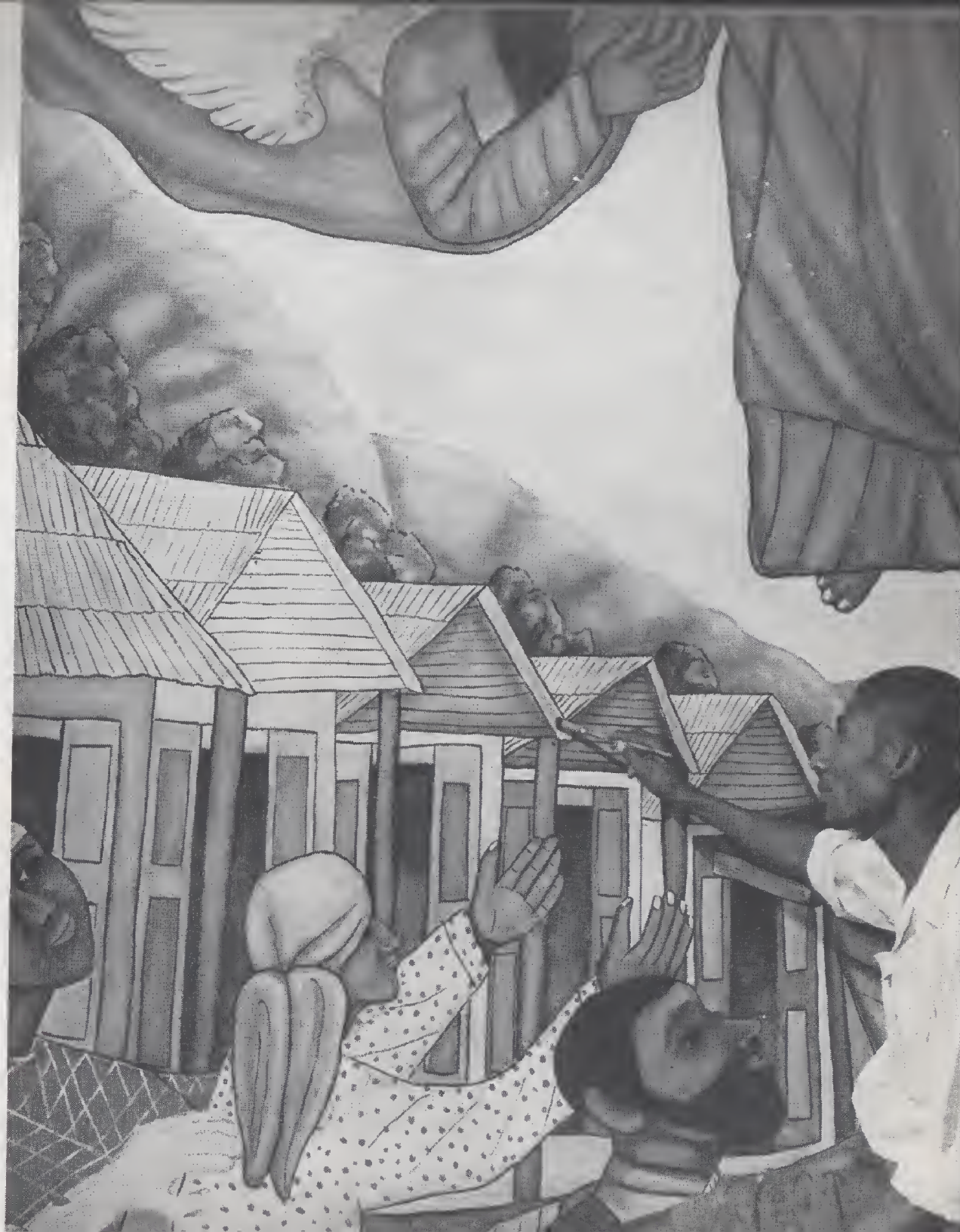
#### Art and Architecture

The most interesting and original expressions of the arts in Haiti stem from its rich folklore, in which the dominant ingredient is voodoo. This vital African element, which is the heart and soul of Haitian music, dancing, and painting, has had a lesser influence on national literature and almost none at all on architecture and sculpture.

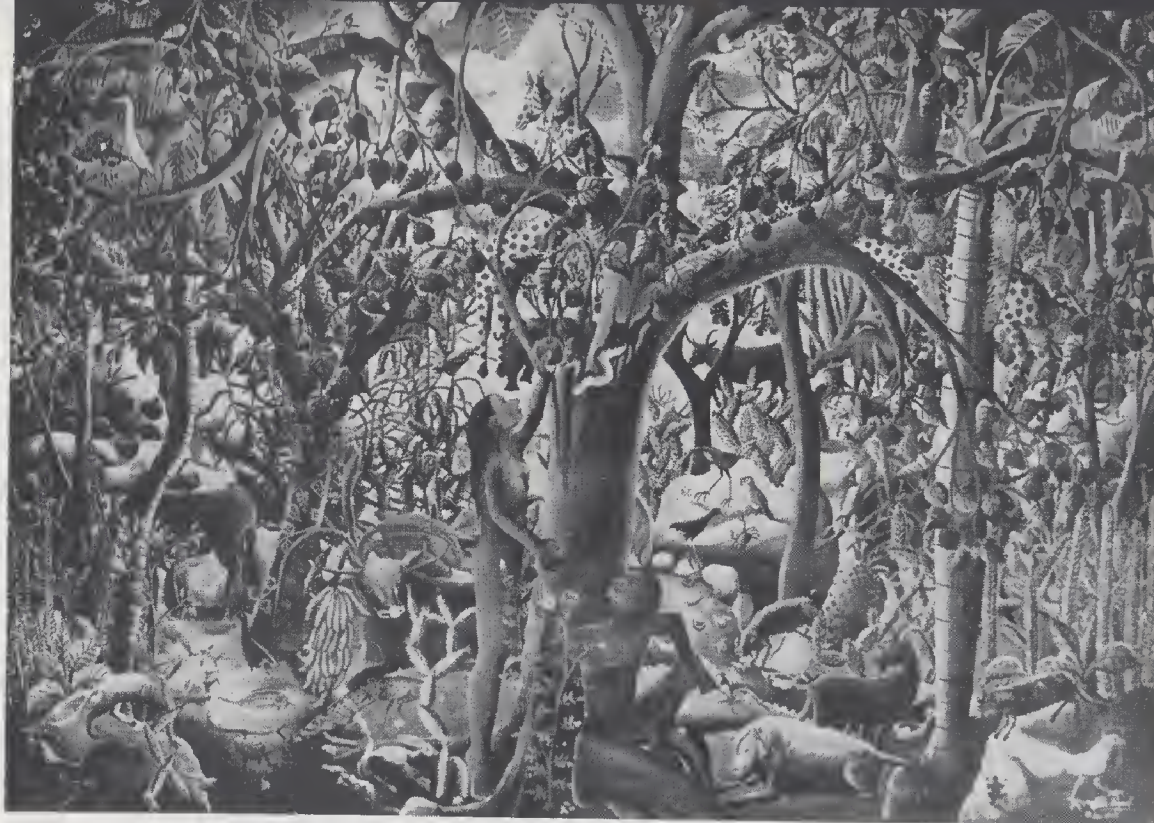
Unlike music and dancing, which have long been as much a part of Haitian peasant life as eating and sleeping, painting and sculpture have emerged and flowered into a national movement only within the last few decades. Before the Centre d'Art opened its doors in Port-au-Prince in 1944, the innate artistic temperament of the Haitians found occasional expression in the painted designs on some, but not many, of the peasant *cailles*; while a small number of inspired individuals, most of them of humble birth, painted in their spare time for the love of it, without encouragement or recognition. With few exceptions, they were self-taught. Their isolation from each other and the lack of an outlet for their work prevented the development of anything resembling an art movement until the North American painter, DeWitt Peters, arrived in Haiti and undertook to fill this void by establishing the Centre d'Art in a spacious old building in the capital.



Castera Bazine beside  
one of his murals







**"Earthly Paradise,"**  
an oil painting  
by Wilson Bigaud

Inaugurated with a nucleus of some ten artists, notably Hector Hyppolite and Philomé Obin, the new Art Center drew talented painters and aspiring ones from all parts of the country and from all walks of life. Students were supplied with materials and were encouraged to develop their individual techniques. Sculpture, wood-carving, and handicrafts were also important activities. As a result of this creative enterprise, Haitian art was soon causing a sensation from California to Paris.

As Haiti's popular art movement gathered momentum, the primitive painters came into prominence. Of these, the late Hector Hyppolite is probably the most famous and the most interesting because he was a voodoo *hougan* (priest), whose art portrayed black magic and other supernatural elements of his religion. A year before his death in 1948, his primitives were acclaimed at UNESCO's international exhibit in Paris. More restrained and disciplined is the primitivism of Philomé

Obin, who has drawn inspiration from his native habitat Cap-Haïtien and his own deeply religious nature.

The murals of the Episcopal Cathedral St. Trinité in Port-au-Prince, which have been called the "crowning achievement of Haitian art," represent both the talent and spiritual depth of Obin and of the brilliant, self-taught Wilson Bigaud, whose mural called "Miracle at Cana" covers a space of 528 square feet; another outstanding contributor to the murals of St. Trinité Cathedral is Castera Bazile. Among other Haitian painters who won recognition in the rebirth of painting at the Centre d'Art are Antonio Joseph, Dieudonné Cédor, Louverture Poisson, and Gabriel Alix.

In 1950, a group of dissident painters left the Centre to form their own gallery, the Foyer des Arts Plastiques, located on the Rue des Miracles in the capital. Among them are Max Pinchinat, Roland Dorcély, and Luce Tournier; the work of each is distinctive and individual.





**One of the few colonial churches  
still standing in Port-au-Prince**

Most prominent among the older generation of Haitian sculptors are Louis Edmond Laforestier and Normil Ulysse Charles. The former, who exhibited in Paris in 1867, created outstanding portrait busts and designs for the Haitian mint. The latter studied in France and is best known for his monument to Toussaint Louverture and bust of Dessalines.

In the revival of sculpture and woodcarving, set in motion at the Centre d'Art, Odilon Duperier and Jasmin Joseph came to the fore. Duperier, who was once a carpenter's assistant, excels in carved masks and figures. Jasmin Joseph is best known for his lively, imaginative terracotta sculptures and the choir screen

he created for St. Trinité Cathedral. Georges Liataud's sheet iron sculptures are more appreciated every day. Haiti's architectural heritage presents interesting contrasts, due to the transplantation of the predominating styles from Africa and France during the colonial era. The first Negro slaves quite naturally modeled their dwellings (cailles) after the thatched huts of their native Africa. This simple and picturesque architectural pattern has persisted through the centuries and presents interesting variations today in the form of brilliantly painted doors, shutters, and woodwork. The French château-type architecture, introduced by the colonists, is the predominating style in urban areas and reached grandiose proportions in Christophe's palace San-Souci, said to have been patterned after the royal château of Saint-Cloud near Paris.

The few examples of French colonial architecture that survived the revolutions and civil wars are to be seen in and around Cap-Haïtien and in the capital. Among these are the neo-classic parish church of Cap-Haïtien, the eighteenth-century cathedral of Port-au-Prince, and several fountains, forts, and fine stone bridges in or near Le Cap. Traces of early Spanish colonial architecture are to be seen in the red tiled roofs, balconies, and arcades of a few ancient buildings in Cap-Haïtien. Haiti's most impressive architectural monument is the Citadelle, begun in 1804 under the direction of a Haitian engineer, Henri Besse. The French architectural style of the late nineteenth century left a strong imprint, particularly in Port-au-Prince, where the Iron Market, the National Palace, and elegant mansions of the élite are prime examples.

During the present century, there has been a definite shift in architectural tastes away from the ginger-bread details of the high-peaked structures and toward the popular modern architecture of today. Haiti has produced several outstanding architects, notably Robert Baussan, Albert Mangonés, Max Ewald, and René Villejoint. Pétionville's Cabane Choucoun and the Ibo Lélé Hotel are interesting examples of Baussan's adaptation of the old to the new. Mangonés, a graduate of Cornell University, designed the Théâtre de Verduze,

the Cockfight Arena, and some of the capital's outstanding hotels and private residences.

#### Literature

Haiti possesses a truly national literature. It is a fascinating composite of all the varied elements of Haitian life—its French and African roots, its primitive and sophisticated cultures, revolutionary and nationalistic fervor, sociological and political conflicts, and emotional and intellectual patterns. Poetic by nature, the Haitian people have expressed themselves in all forms of poetry, from the Creole folklore of the peasants to the sophisticated French verse of the élite. Many writers of the nineteenth century devoted themselves to creating *belles lettres* in the traditional French style and some received the highest recognition of the French Academy. Others, notably Antoine Duprés, were inspired by the struggle for human and political freedom. Toward the end of the century, romanticism flowered with the lyric poetry written by Oswald Durand in French and Creole.

30



The School of Arts and Letters, Port-au-Prince

New influences in the early twentieth century were responsible for an interesting transition in the style and content of Haitian poetry, fiction, and other forms of prose. Haiti's pioneer ethnologists J. C. Dorsainvil, who devoted his life to the study of voodoo, and Jean Price-Mars focused attention on native folklore and its literary values. The occupation of Haiti by the United States Marines stirred up a wave of nationalism and social consciousness that influenced the literature of the period. Particularly significant was the *Révue Indigène*, founded in 1927 and edited by the poet Emile Roumère with the collaboration of Philippe Thoby-Marcelin and the late Jacques Roumain, both top-ranking novelists. This revue stimulated a profound re-examination and a realistic evaluation of Haiti's social and cultural heritage, leading to greater emphasis on the rich folklore of African origin by poets and novelists including Carl Brouard, Lorimer Denis, François Duvalier, Jean Brierre, and Roussan Camille.

Léon Laleau, talented and versatile writer of poetry and prose, wrote *Le Choc*, portraying the despair of his people; his *Musique Nègre* is an excellent collection of verse expressing the heart and soul of the Haitian masses. Brouard, whose style is both virile and delicate, employed Haitian material in his natural unadorned poems. The symbolist poet Magloire St. Aude also belongs to this group, whose poetry is Creole in expression and feeling, even though linguistically French for the most part. Emile Roumer's lyric poem *Déclaration Paysanne* has been put to music. The late Louis Diaquoi, a leading journalist and poet who believed that Haitian writers should draw inspiration from their African heritage, fostered the group called "Les Griots," whose basic source material comes from voodoo.

This important transition, or trend, in Haitian literature reached a high point in the novels of the late Jacques Roumain. This distinguished novelist, poet, and ethnologist rose to international fame with his powerful and realistic portrayal of life in a peasant community in *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (*Masters of the Dew*), which has been translated into some 17 different languages. Among other Haitian writers who have been acclaimed





Haitians make amusing costumes for carnival

abroad are the brothers Pierre Marcelin and Philippe Thoby-Marcelin, whose novels *Canapé Verte*, *The Pencil of God*, and *The Beast of the Haitian Hills* deal with peasant life with an objectivity and detachment that were entirely lacking in the works of Romain and

Marie Chauvet. Justin Lhérisson is best known for his unforgettable description of Haitian life in *La Famille des Petite Caille*.

Other contemporary Haitian writers worthy of mention are the novelists Fernand Hibbert, Jacques Alexis, Edriss St. Amant, J. F. Roy, F. Morisseau-Leroy, and Antoine Innocent, and the poets Louis Borno, Damoclès Vieux, Luc Grimard, Charles Moravia, Constantin Mayard, and Louis H. Durand. The poet and playwright Massillon Coicou, a literary leader of the so-called Centennial Generation, was one of the first Haitian writers to incorporate Creole into the realm of letters. In the dramatic arts, Frank Fouché and Morisseau-Leroy distinguished themselves by rendering into Creole two plays of Sophocles, the *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, both of which were produced with outstanding success at the Théâtre de Verdure in Port-au-Prince.

In the fields of history, law, and the social sciences, outstanding contributions have been made by a number of twentieth-century writers, including Dantés Bellegarde, diplomat, educator, and historian; the ethnologist Dr. Price-Mars; the late Dr. Dorsainvil, historian and sociologist; Jean Fouchard and Emile Marcelin, essayists; and the historian Enoch Trouillot.

#### Music and Folklore

Nothing more truly reveals the character, temperament, devoutness, and daily life of the Haitian masses than their music, songs, and dances. One might say that they are the very soul of Haiti. Singing, drumming, and dancing go hand-in-hand, particularly in voodoo ceremonies, and are pure African in origin. There is a song for every activity, whether it be religious, festive, or in performance of daily work.

The vast repertoire of original Haitian folk songs has been handed down from generation to generation and added to by the descendants of the slaves; few songs have been written down until recent years. Most of the songs are chants, but they are not sung in harmony. In the realm of Voodoo, there are songs to every loa (god) and to be in communication with one's loa, the Haitian must become "possessed" by the spirit of his god, who thus speaks through him. The African word



The School of Medicine, Port-au-Prince

32

for spirit is believed to be synonymous with the words *vodun*, *vaudou*, or voodoo. Possession by the loa is induced mainly by the drummers, who beat out the rhythm with an intensity and persistence that build up an almost hypnotic effect. The *hougan's*, or priest's, female chorus is an important part of the ceremony.

In addition to voodoo ceremonial and ritual songs, there are many other types including the work songs of the *coubite*, often spiced with gossip and sung in a lively tempo; the party songs sung at the *bamboche* and during the Mardi Gras; others that are anecdotal and memorialize certain events; and still others of a tender, poetic strain like *Haiti Chérie*, expressing the Haitian's deep love for his homeland, written by Othelo Bayard. Interesting collections recorded on long-playing records include "Songs and Dances of Haiti," "Creole Songs of Haiti," and "Haitian Folk Songs."

The musical instruments of Haiti are varied and unique. They include drums of all sizes and descriptions: the four-note bamboo flute, the African *marimba*, the *lambi* (conch shell), the papaya-stem piston, the large bamboo base-vaccine, and the tambourine. Not all of

Haiti's music is of African origin, nor can all of it be called folk music. There are also the formal and sophisticated types of salon and concert music.

Haiti has produced some outstanding composers, many of whom have specialized in the harmonization and orchestration of their country's folk music. These include Justin Elie (1883-1931), whose works include the *Babylon* suite of four oriental sketches, the *Kiskaya*, *Suite Aborigène*, based on Peruvian folklore, and the colorful *Danses Tropicales*, with their rhythmic Haitian and Cuban motifs; Thérémène Manès, known for his studies of the folk dances, *La Meringue* and *La Vadou*; Occide Joanty, composer of the Haitian march "1804" and *Les Vautours du 6 Décembre*; and Ludovic Lamothe (1882-1952), whose slow waltzes reflect the nostalgic melancholy of the Negro.

Haitians love to dance as much as they love to sing. The peasants, dancing individually rather than in couples, express love, sadness, joy, and devoutness in their free, uninhibited bodily motions always to the rhythm of the drum. Sophisticated ballroom dances, such as the meringue, are well-known outside Haiti.

Since 1939, when Mme. Lina Blanchet organized a group of young people to perform traditional Haitian folk songs and dances, a national movement in this direction has been gathering momentum. Jean Léon Destiné, after being acclaimed on the New York stage for his solo interpretations of Haitian dances, returned to Port-au-Prince to direct the Troupe Nationale Folklorique in its regular seasons at the Théâtre de Verdure. This troupe and two others—one organized by the Haitian singer Emerante de Pradines and the other by Odette Wiener—have been enthusiastically received abroad as well as home, thus opening the door to a wider appreciation of this outstanding Haitian art.

### Social Progress

Age-old problems inherited from the past have long been obstacles to social progress in Haiti. Nevertheless progress has been, and is being, made slowly but surely. Some of the major obstacles to present and future social development are the country's high popu-



lution density (348 persons to the square mile), the large rural population representing about 83 per cent of the total, an illiteracy rate estimated at 75 to 85 per cent, a low national income, and an increasing national debt.

During the last quarter century, the Haitian Government has wisely taken advantage of offers of technical and other forms of assistance by entering into co-operative agreements with specialized organizations and agencies of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, to both of which Haiti belongs. Since 1942 the governments of Haiti and the United States have carried on a cooperative public health program known as SCISP (Service Cooperatif Inter-Américain de la Santé Publique). The Rockefeller Foundation and other private foundations have also rendered valuable assistance to Haiti in connection with specific projects.

#### Public Health

The gravity of Haiti's public health problems and the tremendous effort required to solve them can readily be understood in the light of the following facts: only about six per cent of the country's urban population is supplied with water from the 35 water supply systems in operation in Haitian cities, while rural areas have no supply systems at all; the country's 26 hospitals and 355 physicians are concentrated in urban areas; there is only one physician for every 10,000 inhabitants and hospital beds average 0.5 per 1,000 persons; the incidence of malaria is very high. It is no wonder that the life expectancy of males at birth is only 35 years.

More has been accomplished toward improving these conditions than statistics would indicate. During the past two decades the health personnel of the Haitian Government and United States technicians from the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, working together in SCISP, have put into operation new hospitals, dispensaries, clinics, and mobile units and have renovated old installations; inaugurated environmental sanitation and control projects for water supply and sewage disposal; conducted campaigns against malaria, yaws, and other prevalent diseases; and pro-

vided technical training for nurses and midwives.

Joint projects now in various stages of completion include construction of a tuberculosis ward at the hospital in Jérémie and a sewage disposal system; a new "Plan of Operations" for the eradication of malaria, calling for 900 employees; and construction of a potable water distribution system for the town of Arcahaie, which is a pilot project. Fifteen sanitarians are working in the Artibonite Valley and 45 more in the Department of the North, where the Poté Calé program includes training of nurses and midwives, construction of three self-help markets, and environmental sanitation. Technical assistance projects sponsored by the United States Government are administered by the Agency for International Development (AID, U. S. Department of State).

In recent years the Haitian Government has enlisted the advice and assistance of international agencies, which are engaged in a number of important public health projects. The Ministry of Public Health is receiving technical advice for the purpose of formulating a broad, integrated public health service with the aid of the World Health Organization (WHO) and AID. The Haitian Government, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have established a demonstration area of integrated public health services in a sector of the Cul-de-Sac near the capital. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, a specialized organization of the OAS) has granted fellowships for the study of laboratory services, public health administration, veterinary and nurses' training.

Campaigns for the prevention and control of yaws and malaria, two of the primary plagues of Haitians, have been conducted by the Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF with rewarding results. The number of reported cases of yaws declined from 2,570 to 32 per 100,000 persons, a drop of almost 98 per cent, between 1950 and 1956. In a zone comprising more than two million persons, under special observation for the detection and cure of infectious yaws, the incidence fell to three cases per 10,000 inhabitants in 1960. The

anti-malaria campaign, suspended at the end of 1958, was resumed in 1960 under the expanded program of SCISP, calling for 500 additional sector and brigade chiefs, spraymen, and geographical reconnaissance agents. Also of major importance is the community water program, a cooperative undertaking of the government, WHO, and PASB.

Cooperative enterprises to improve public health in Haiti are not confined exclusively to international agencies. Worthy of mention is the action of the Norfolk (Virginia) Rotary Club in establishing a foundation to assist Haiti in the field of medical care.

Because the per capita food supply and its caloric content are among the lowest in Latin America, the Haitian masses suffer from nutritional deficiencies bordering on malnutrition, thus making them a prey to diseases and undermining their physical stamina for work and daily life. To integrate the various nutrition activities carried on by the Haitian Ministries of Public Health, Agriculture, and Education, the government and the Food and Agricultural Organizations of the United Nations (FAO) are working toward the establishment of a Council of Nutrition at the presidential level. UNESCO's extensive program of child aid includes school lunches and CARE distributes food among rural families.

### Labor

Roughly 90 per cent of the population derives its living from some form of agricultural activity, chiefly subsistence farming and stock raising; hence, the number of workers in skilled and unskilled trades is relatively small. Perhaps the greatest need in the labor field is the development of skills, a need that the International Labor Organization (ILO) has done much to fill with its technical assistance program. ILO experts, for example, taught Haitian mechanics how to construct simple windmills for irrigation and other purposes; introduced the wheelwright's trade; taught Haitian artisans how to make their own machetes for cutting sugar cane, so that these indispensable articles would no longer have to be imported; and revolutionized the country's tanning industry by introducing bet-

ter methods for curing hides. To meet long-term needs, ILO training specialists are helping Haiti to reorganize technical education and streamlining one of its leading vocational schools.

The trade union movement dates from 1946, when unions were recognized by law for the first time. There is one federation, the National Union of Haiti, which claims a membership of more than 2,500. Independent, unaffiliated unions have a total membership estimated at around 7,000. There are presently about 22 unions classified as "major" by Haitian officials. The growth of the trade union movement has been slow due, in large measure, to the relatively small number of industrial and professional workers as compared with farmers and rural labor. Out of an economically active population of around 1,750,000 men and women, roughly 1,500,000 are engaged in agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing; manufacturing industries employ upwards of 85,000, commerce 62,000, service occupations 80,400, construction 10,300, and mining, transportation, and public services around 8,000.

The Constitution declares that every worker is entitled to a fair wage, to the completion of his apprenticeship, to the protection of his health, to social security, and to the well-being of his family insofar as national economic development permits. The Ministry of Labor administers national labor legislation which, during the last two decades, has established definite standards as to hours, wages, and related matters. Normal working hours are eight hours a day or 48 hours per week, with a weekly rest period of 24 hours and annual paid vacations of 15 days per full year of service. Minimum wages are also fixed by law. Strikes and lockouts may be legal or illegal, depending upon conditions prescribed by law. Arbitration and conciliation procedures are under the supervision of the Ministry of Labor, which is charged with coordinating all activities relating to labor.

### Social Welfare

Social welfare was primarily the concern of private organizations and church groups until the Haitian Social Security Institute was established by law in 1949.



The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare administers national programs and legislation. According to law, the following classes of workers are covered by social security: (a) employees and officials of the state and of agencies controlled by the state; (b) employees, workers, and day laborers in agricultural, industrial, and commercial enterprises and, in general, any manual or intellectual worker who renders services, for remuneration, to an employer by virtue of an express or tacit labor contract; (c) teachers and supervisors in private educational establishments; and (d) domestic servants paid in kind or in money.

The law further declares that social security is compulsory and that all employers must maintain a register of workers and their wages. The principal benefits in effect at present are limited to occupational accidents, disability, and death. Not in effect as yet are benefits for illness and maternity. The law does not provide for unemployment insurance, retirement and pensions (except for government employees under certain conditions), or old age benefits. There is a legal require-

ment that every employer, whether an individual or a company, employing more than 100 workers, is required to maintain a dispensary headed by a Haitian physician and equipped to provide first aid to victims of accidents and to protect the health of the workers.

#### **Housing**

Substandard and unsanitary housing is one of Haiti's most serious problems, affecting the lives and health of an estimated two-thirds of the population. Among the low-cost housing projects constructed in recent years are Cité Vincent, Cité Magloire, and Cité Duvalier in Port-au-Prince, and Cité Lescot in Cap-Haïtien. Additional new housing projects are underway in the capital, Gonaïves, and Anse-a-Veau.

There is increasing emphasis on community development in Haiti and fellowships for study and training in this field have been granted to Haitians under the OAS Fellowship Program. Community development is one of the major projects in the 10-year plan for Haiti's economic and social betterment contemplated under the Alliance for Progress.

#### **Cooperatives**

The cooperative movement is gaining headway, although it is not widespread. Most successful and promising of the cooperatives are the 30 credit unions now functioning. There are also five agricultural co-ops and two production and service co-ops.

#### **Economic Growth**

The Haitian economy, predominantly agricultural today as in the past, reached the peak of its prosperity during the colonial period and began to decline after the revolution, which destroyed the wealth-producing sugar plantations and the fine irrigation systems established by the French. With independence came a complete transformation of the colonial economic system from one of vast plantations worked by slave labor to a national economy, in which the plantations were broken up into thousands of small, individually-owned farms.

During the last century and a half, Haiti has been

**Model of a native caille on the  
Bicentennial Exposition grounds**





Tilling young  
sugar corn



unable to attain, or even approximate, the great prosperity of the colonial period; this is due to several reasons. The country's basic export crops—coffee, sugar, cacao, and more recently sisal—cannot be raised profitably on the small, individual farms which average under three acres each; few exceed 30 acres. The majority of peasants can grow only enough food to live on. Farm implements and methods are, with few exceptions, primitive. The area of tillable land, limited by Haitian topography to about one third of the national territory, has been further reduced by the pressure of a steadily increasing population. Thus as subsistence farming increases, the production of commercial crops for export declines.

Haiti's traditional economic dependence upon agricultural exports now fails to provide sufficient national income. However, the country has valuable resources that have not as yet been developed or exploited on a commercial scale. These include minerals and petroleum, forest products, and an abundance of fish in rivers and offshore waters.

### Agriculture and Livestock

Haiti was one of the first areas in the New World to produce sugar cane, cacao, and coffee—the three crops that have contributed the most to the country's economic growth during the last four and a half centuries. Columbus brought sugar cane to Hispaniola on his second voyage, and this product was the greatest single source of wealth until France lost her prized colony. Commercial cultivation was not resumed until about 30 years ago, and today sugar ranks third among the principal export crops, after coffee and sisal. The output of raw sugar has increased substantially in recent years.

Coffee, introduced into Haiti by Jesuit priests in the early part of the eighteenth century, is now the leading export crop, although exports have declined sharply since 1954. Haitian coffee is a mild type known as *coffea arabica*; it has an excellent flavor and commands a premium price when properly processed. The Haitian Government has taken various measures to



There are all sorts of delicious tropical fruit in Haiti

improve processing methods and to encourage the modernization of plants by granting special benefits. Since 1925, the National Agricultural Production Service has subsidized plantings of selected coffee seedlings in order to improve the quality of the product. The four principal coffee-growing regions are located on mountain slopes or hillsides, at an altitude of about 1,500 feet above sea level. The total area of roughly 400,000 acres consists chiefly of small, individually-owned farms. Much of the coffee grows wild or semi-wild and is harvested by peasant farmers. There are few plantations of more than 50 acres.

Although Haiti's cacao production is small in terms of world supply, it has been an important export commodity since early colonial days and usually ranks fourth among the country's exports. Most of the cacao is grown by peasants on small farms. Production since World War II has fluctuated at between three and four million pounds a year, of which about two million pounds were exported. A rehabilitation extension program initiated by the Haitian Government is expected to increase future production.



**Loading sugar cane**

**38**

Haiti's second most important export commodity (after coffee) is sisal, the raw vegetable fiber used extensively in binder twine. The main producing region is along the northern coast, to the east of Cap-Haïtien, where the principal processing factory is located. Sisal is grown chiefly on large plantations.

Bananas have been an important product ever since the first banana roots were planted in Hispaniola by Friar Tomás de Berlanga, a Spanish priest who brought them from the Canary Islands in 1516. Haitian production has declined during the last decade, due to diseases and unfavorable weather, while increased domestic consumption has reduced the supply available for export.

Other commercial crops that figure in Haiti's foreign trade are cotton, castor beans, and the grasses and plants from which essential oils are derived. Haitian cotton plants attain tree-like proportions. The quality of its staple, as a result of selective breeding carried on by the Agricultural Service of the Haitian Government, compares favorably with the variety known in the United States as Sea Island. The cotton is ginned before export, and part of the cottonseed thus obtained

is used by small domestic plants manufacturing soap, cooking oil, and lard substitutes; the remainder is exported. Residual cottonseed cake, a valuable fertilizer and stockfeed, is also exported. The essential oils include oil of amyris, citron, lemon grass, néroli, petit-grain, and vetiver.

The principal food crops for domestic consumption are rice, corn, sweet potatoes, beans, and a wide variety of other vegetables, fruits, and roots; of the latter, the manioc plant (cassava) supplies the Haitians with their bread staple.

Agricultural development, irrigation, and improved farming methods have been extended considerably during the last two decades by two cooperative agencies known as SCIPA and SHADA, established by the governments of Haiti and the United States. SHADA (Société Haitiano-Américaine de Développement Agricole) began in 1941 to develop important agricultural resources, notably sisal, essential oils, cacao, fruits, and spices; lumber and rubber development also form part of the SHADA program.

The Inter-American Cooperative Service of Agricultural Production (SCIPA) concentrates mainly on irrigation and agricultural extension work. Irrigation projects completed at Fonds Parisien, St. Raphael, and Villard supply water for some 12,000 acres. The government's most ambitious undertaking is the Artibonite Valley project, which has been moving ahead with technical and financial aid from the United States. Upon its completion, this project will irrigate roughly 85,000 acres of land and will furnish electric power to a large part of the country.

Since 1952, much-needed loans and credits have been provided to hundreds of small farmers by the Haitian Institute of Farm and Industrial Credit through the National Bank of the Haitian Republic, for the purpose of stimulating increased production of foodstuffs and of items generally imported. The Institute's functions were broadened in 1961, when the name of the Agricultural and Industrial Development Institute was adopted. This agency is administering a loan of \$3,500,000 granted to the National Bank by the Inter-



## Industry

### Minerals and Petroleum

American Development Bank for both agricultural and industrial expansion.

Livestock is raised on a small scale and cattle, hogs, and chickens are used for domestic requirements. Native stocks are being improved by cross-breeding with imported animals. Two major stock-feeding centers were established in 1959 at Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien and, more recently, a new slaughter house. Improvements in animal husbandry are being made under the direction of the government's Central School of Agriculture at Damien.

## Industry

Haitian industry, in the past primarily devoted to the processing of agricultural and forest products, is branching out with the manufacture of more consumer goods. The processing of sugar and sisal continue to be the chief industrial activities, both of which are expanding. Haiti's largest sugar mill, on the outskirts of the capital, produces raw and refined sugar, molasses, rum, and alcohol. Another large sugar refinery being built in the north, with financial assistance from the United States Development Loan Fund, will have an estimated capacity of 40,000 metric tons of sugar a year. The same lending agency granted credits to help expand a sisal plantation and processing factory.

Native cotton provides the basis for an expanding textile industry concentrated in Port-au-Prince; important by-products include cottonseed cake, meal, and oil. Other industries producing for domestic consumption are tanneries, corn and rice mills, and factories manufacturing shoes, cigarettes, glass, soap, and chocolate. Rum and alcohol are produced by numerous local distilleries. Newer industries include the manufacture of aluminum and enamelware, garments and hats, essential oils, cement, and plastics; there is a new canning factory. Further industrial expansion will be facilitated by the new dam and hydroelectric plant at Peligre on the Artibonite River, which is expected to double the present installed capacity of 26,000 kwh. now produced by thermal plants using imported fuel oil.

The production of handicrafts constitutes a small but



**Skillful hands fashion original straw handicrafts**

growing industry, in which hundreds of individual craftsmen and shop workers are engaged. This "petite industrie" produces a wide variety of artistic and useful articles made chiefly from mahogany, sisal, and straw, valued in excess of five million dollars a year in terms of wholesale exports. Haitian craftsmen are particularly skilled in woodcarving, weaving, drawn-work, and embroidery; and their products have a good foreign market.

### Minerals and Petroleum

A beginning has been made in recent years in developing Haiti's mineral resources, chief of which are bauxite, copper, manganese, lignite, and petroleum. There are smaller deposits of gold, silver, iron, antimony, tin, sulphur, coal, nickel, gypsum, and porphyry, most of them still awaiting exploitation. Private gold mining is permitted, but gold must be sold to the National Bank of the Republic. Subsoil rights belong to the state. The first exports of Haitian copper concentrates were made in 1961 and a copper agreement was signed with a Canadian firm. A copper recovery plant





**A wood market on the waterfront**



is located at Terre Neuve. A United States company is reported to have found oil in the Cul-de-Sac region. Exploration and drilling have also been undertaken in the Central Plateau and Gonâve Island.

#### Other Resources

Haiti's forest resources consist of 150,000 acres of excellent pine, having a high content of turpentine and rosin, and major stands of mahogany, logwood, tropical oak, cedar, rosewood, and taverneau. Lignum vitae is found on Gonâve Island and the northwest mainland. The most accessible forest areas have been heavily exploited, particularly the logwood and pine forests, which provide a large quantity of lumber for export. Lumber production has declined in recent years due to deforestation, continuous cutting and stripping to make charcoal and provide firewood, and diseases. The processing of turpentine and rosin are important industries.

An important resource as yet undeveloped on a commercial scale is fishing. The offshore waters abound in tuna, marlin, bonito, tarpon, bass, and rock lobster. However, Haitian fishermen seldom venture more than a few miles from their home ports because they lack modern deep-sea fishing boats and equipment. The total annual catch, estimated at four to five million pounds, is caught with the simplest type of fishing gear. Inland waters also contain an abundance of good fish.

#### Foreign Trade

Haiti's export trade, which is vital to the national economy, consists primarily of agricultural products. Coffee exports exceed all others in value, representing roughly 63 per cent of total export earnings. Sisal and raw sugar (together with molasses) rank second and third, followed by cacao. Other export commodities of lesser value include castor beans, essential oils, sisal shoes, tomatoes, lumber, mahogany products, and handicrafts. The chief imports in order of value are the following categories: food, beverages, wheat flour, and tobacco; textile yarns and fabrics; chemicals; iron, steel, and other metal manufactures; fuels; motor vehicles; machinery; pharma-

ceutical products; and household goods. The United States is Haiti's principal trading partner, its purchases representing normally from 65 to 70 per cent of the total value of Haitian exports, and its sales amounting in value to 40 to 50 per cent of total imports.

Haiti maintained a favorable balance of trade during the decade 1941-51. However, the trade balance has been unfavorable during most of the last decade. This situation is due primarily to the drop in prices for Haiti's export products. The total value of the country's trade has been declining in recent years; in 1960 it amounted to \$70,000,000, of which imports represented \$38,000,000 and exports, \$32,000,000, leaving a trade deficit of \$6,000,000. Haiti maintains a relatively high tariff on exports (10 per cent ad valorem) and imports (30 per cent ad valorem).

#### Banking and Public Finance

The National Bank of Haiti (Banque Nationale de la Republique d'Haïti) is the sole bank of issue and serves as treasurer of the government, fiscal agent for development and other loans, and as a commercial bank; it has branches in the capital and the major cities and towns of the provinces. The Royal Bank of Canada engages mainly in foreign trade operations. The Banque Colombo and the Banque Commerciale d'Haïti are savings and loan institutions; all three are located in Port-au-Prince. Haiti is a member of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and the Inter-American Development Bank.

The basic monetary unit of Haiti is the *gourde*, exchangeable at the legal rate of five gourdes to one dollar (U.S.). This rate is based on the Haitian-United States Monetary Convention of 1919, which pegged the currency at five gourdes to the dollar. The *gourde* contains 100 *centimes*, issued in denominations of one, two, five, ten, twenty, fifty, and one hundred paper notes. Fractional currency circulates in coins of 5, 10, 20, and 50 *centimes*. There is no exchange control and no legal limit to the amount of foreign currency which may be taken in or out of Haiti. United States currency circulates freely.



The Post Office, Port-au-Prince

42

The government's chief source of revenue is customs duties, which amounted to 56 per cent of the total revenue for the fiscal year 1959-60. Taxes on production and consumption for the same period represented 36 per cent of fiscal receipts, of which 14 per cent consisted of taxes established to meet specific expenditures. Taxes on personal income constituted eight per cent of the government receipts. Until 1961, the tourist industry was an important source of national income and the second largest earner of foreign exchange. However, since 1960, when tourists spent close to eight million dollars in Haiti, there has been a sharp decline in income from this source.

To cope with Haiti's worsening economic situation, President Duvalier announced in the fall of 1959 an economic austerity program, increased taxes, and reforms in tax administration. The latter task was undertaken by the Haitian Government with technical assistance from the United States International Cooperation Administration (now the Agency for Interna-

tional Development, AID). In mid-1961, the government requested the joint technical assistance of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, the Organization of American States, and the Inter-American Development Bank for a general survey of the country's economy as a first step toward adoption of a program of economic and social development under the Alliance for Progress. To this end, a group of technicians and experts spent six months in Haiti, from November 1961 through April 1962. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund granted Haiti a standby credit of six million dollars to maintain monetary stability; and United States aid to Haiti during 1961 amounted to around \$12,500,000. Early in 1962, the Agency for International Development (AID) allotted \$7,250,000 to the program of economic and technical assistance to Haiti for the purpose of helping to ease the country's foreign exchange problems and to increase national income through selected projects.

Among important steps taken by the Haitian Government in 1961-62 were passage of a new income tax law raising the rate on personal income and corporate profits, and providing penalties for tax evaders; an increased excise tax on petroleum products; and consolidation of taxes on coffee under a better system. Haiti's national budget for 1961-62 is equivalent to \$30,400,000 (U.S.), an increase of close to four million dollars over the previous year. In January 1962, President Duvalier announced a "Crusade for Economic Liberation" and the creation of a special council to formulate and activate a recovery program.

#### Communications

Haiti is very adequately served by international airlines and steamship companies, but lacks good highways and railways for domestic transportation. Of the 12 major seaports, Port-au-Prince ranks first in importance and Cap Haïtien, second. There is direct steamship and airline service between the United States and other Western Hemisphere republics, also Europe. Four or more foreign airlines make scheduled stops at Haiti's international airport Bowen Field, on the outskirts of the capital.





A highway under construction

43

The country's domestic transport facilities consist of one state-owned railway, *Compagnie Nationale des Chemins de Fer d'Haiti*, running a distance of 90 miles between Port-au-Prince and the port of St. Marc, with a spur to the village of Verretes; one national airline, *Compagnie Haitienne de Transports Ariens*, operated by the Haitian Aviation Corps, which flies passengers, mail, and freight between the capital and the principal cities and ports; and approximately 2,000 miles of roads, most of them built in the 1920's and now in bad condition, except for those in the region of the capital. As a result, the transport of farm products to markets is difficult and costly, imposing a great handicap on agriculture, Haiti's chief source of livelihood, and on the tourist industry. For the transport of sugar cane in the Cul-de-Sac, the Haitian-American Sugar Company operates a railway with a total trackage of less than 100 miles. Sisal raised in the Cap-Haïtien area is transported by a 14-mile railway maintained by SHADA.

The National Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and

Communications is engaged in a major highway improvement and construction program that is receiving financial and technical assistance from the World Bank, the U.S. Development Loan Fund, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. According to estimates made in 1960, Haiti had 8,000 passenger automobiles, 2,000 buses, and 2,000 trucks in use. Coastal shipping supplements the railways and highways in transporting domestic produce. This is carried on by 300 or more schooners registered under the Haitian flag.

The government owns and operates domestic telephone and telegraph communications. Plans for a new twelve-million-dollar telephone and telegraph system are currently under study. International telephone and telegraph service are provided by several companies. In addition to the government-operated radio station, there are 15 or more private commercial transmitters. Haiti's first television station was inaugurated early in 1960. It is owned and operated by a concessionaire, *Tele Haiti, S.A.*, under a contract with the government.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

### Entry Requirements International Travel

#### Travel Information

Entry requirements, customs regulations, and transportation schedules are subject to change. Therefore, when planning a trip to Haiti, you should obtain the latest information from the nearest Haitian Consulate, a local travel agency, a steamship or airline company, the Haitian Government Tourist Bureau (Rockefeller Plaza, New York), or from the Inter-American Tourist Service of the Pan American Union.\*

#### Entry Requirements

For a visit of 30 days or less (with an additional 30-day extension permitted), citizens of the United States and Canada are required to furnish a birth certificate or similar documentary proof of citizenship; a smallpox vaccination certificate; and a round-trip ticket or transportation to another country. These documents suffice for the issuance of a tourist card, costing two dollars, which is issued by the transportation company or obtained immediately upon arrival.

#### International Travel

The principal steamship lines sailing from United States ports to Haiti (the chief port-of-call being Port-au-Prince) are the Alcoa Steamship Co., the Eastern Steamship Corporation, the Atlantic Cruise Line—all sailing from Florida ports—and the Lykes Line, sailing from Gulf ports. Other foreign steamship companies serving Haiti are the Grace Line, Royal Netherlands, and Panama Line. Many of these lines and other foreign steamship companies feature special Caribbean cruises, which include Haiti, during the fall, winter, and spring seasons. Pan American Airways and Delta Air Lines provide scheduled service from the United States to Port-au-Prince.

It is possible to motor from the Dominican Republic to Haiti by any one of three routes. The principal one

\* The Inter-American Tourist Service of the Pan American Union publishes the following: "Requirements for the Entry of U.S. Tourists into the Latin American Republics" (10 cents) and "Directory of Hotels—Central America, Panama, and the West Indies" (10 cents). Orders should be addressed to the Sales and Promotion Division, Pan American Union, Washington 6, D.C.

## Travel Within Haiti Currency and Prices Hotels and Restaurants

connects Santo Domingo and Port-au-Prince and is a day's trip, depending upon the condition of the road. The northern route to Cap-Haïtien via Dajabón is quite good. The third route connects the capitals of the two countries via Belladère, Lascahobas, and Mirebalais.

#### Travel Within Haiti

The most interesting way to tour Haiti is by car, provided the itinerary is over roads in good condition. An automobile and chauffeur may be hired by the hour, day, or week at reasonable rates. Taxis may be hired for short trips in the resort areas near the capital. Bus transportation is not recommended. Haiti's only domestic airline, Compagnie Haitienne de Transports Ariens (COHATA), maintains a passenger transport service, which makes scheduled and charter flights to the principal cities and ports. Tourists may bring their own cars into Haiti without the payment of duties or other fees, provided the vehicle is for personal use only. An extra container for gasoline and a complete tool kit are recommended, since service stations are few and far between.

#### Currency and Prices

As previously mentioned, the Haitian gourde (gde.) is equivalent to 20 cents U.S., or five to the dollar. United States currency is accepted throughout the country. The prices charged by hotels and restaurants catering to tourists in the capital and its environs are comparable to those in the United States. In more distant cities and in rural areas, the level of prices is much lower. Port-au-Prince is a free port for a wide variety of imported merchandise, including perfume, crystal, china, watches, and other luxury items.

#### Hotels and Restaurants

Tourist hotels in and near the capital are famous for their good accommodations, service, and scenic surroundings. The older ones have a French atmosphere, as well as architecture, and a special charm. The newest ones are ultra-modern, having swimming pools and other attractions. There are some good pensions, charging lower rates. A ten per cent service charge is added to the regular rates.





A beautiful view of Port-au-Prince  
from Le Perhoir Restaurant

Haiti's Afro-French cuisine is noted for its distinctive recipes and the subtle flavors imparted by native herbs. You can make many appetizing discoveries in creole cookery, if you will order some of the following dishes best-known by their creole names: the national dish of rice and beans is *pois ac duriz collés*; *grillot cochon avec banane pesée* is pork chop, specially prepared with pimentos and lemon and served with bananas; *tassot avec sauce pimentée* is salted, drier beef served in a special sauce; *hareng saure ac z'abocat avec cassave mouillée* is a special preparation of dried fish, avocado and cassava (manioc). In addition, you will enjoy *riz aux champignons* (rice and mushrooms), and

a wonderful stew called *gros bouillon poulet*. Be sure to try a salad prepared with the tasty shoots of the *palmiste* (palmetto tree). Seafood is delicious and plentiful, including rock lobster, shrimp, land-crabs, and sea turtles. Among the tempting desserts are coconut ice cream, sweet potato pudding, and all sort of *confitures* (fruit preserves). The French cuisine of the leading restaurants and night clubs is superb. Among the native fruits that may be new to you are guava, sapodilla, star apple, and soursop.

#### Handicrafts

Tourists become enthusiastic shoppers when they discover the variety of handicrafts that are sold in the shops and markets of the capital and principal cities. Hand-woven mats, baskets, hats, and trays are fashioned from gayly-colored straw. Strong durable sisal is used for attractive pocketbooks and sandals. Mahogany articles include highly polished salad sets, trays, and such larger items as coffee tables. Miscellaneous items are carved from *lignum vitae*, rosewood, and other rare native woods. You will also find exquisite tortoise-shell articles, handmade lace, drawn-work, and embroidered pieces.

In the workshop of the Centre d'Art (Port-au-Prince), skilled craftsmen specialize in unique enameled trays and table tops of original design; hand-painted boxes and screens, and linoleum block prints for Christmas cards. Voodoo drums, some of them masterpieces of painted decoration, make exclusive souvenirs. Creole recordings of voodoo songs, meringues, and native drum pieces are a unique addition to any record collection. It is amazing the number of things that can be made to order, including blouses, skirts, dresses, jackets, shoes, and furniture, all of high quality and at very reasonable prices.

#### Suitable Clothing

Light tropical clothing is worn throughout Haiti, except in the cooler highlands, where a woolen jacket, sweater, or topcoat is needed. A raincoat or umbrella is essential during the two rainy seasons (April through June, and October through November).



**This skillful  
craftsman is  
carving a fine  
mahogany article**



Area: 10,714 square miles

Capital: Port au Prince

Official language: French

Population: 3,539,000\*

Population: 200,000\*

Unit of currency: the *gourde*  
(equal to \$.20 U.S.)

Flag: the left half, next to the staff, is black and the other half, red. On a rectangular field in the center is the national coat of arms of symbolic design.

\* Official estimate, 1961

Departments <sup>1</sup>	Population <sup>2</sup>	Principal cities	Population <sup>2</sup>
Ouest (West)	1,083,069	Port-au-Prince	134,117
Sud (South)	739,602	Les Cayes	11,608
Artibonite	567,221	Gonaïves	13,634
Nord (North)	539,049	Cap-Haïtien	24,229
Nord Ouest (Northwest)	168,279	Port-de-Paix	6,405

<sup>1</sup> Population figures are not available at this writing for the four new departments created in 1962, named as follows: Nord Est (Northeast), Centre (Central), Sud Est (Southeast), and Grande Anse. These provinces do not appear on the map on page 2.

<sup>2</sup> Official Census of 1950, Haitian Statistical Institute

47

### PRINCIPAL EXPORT PRODUCTS

(value in millions of gourdes)

	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Coffee	215.7	119.8	148.3	104.9	145.5	76.4	86.5
Sisal	24.1	28.6	29.5	30.3	26.6	25.9	19.6
Sugar	6.9	9.1	12.6	15.7	4.0	4.7	17.8

### VALUE OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

(in millions of gourdes)

YEAR	IMPORTS	EXPORTS **
1954	239.1	273.2
1955	231.3	180.2
1956	248.6	210.1
1957	197.6*	171.6
1958	216.5	197.1
1959	151.6	139.9
1960	180.3	165.7

\* Beginning October 1957, duty free imports are based on an official estimate.

Source: International Monetary Fund.

\*\* Exports of coffee, sisal, and sugar.



## THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the regional organization of the Western Hemisphere created to maintain the peace, ensure freedom and security, and promote the welfare of all Americans. The member states are Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The OAS is an outgrowth of the International Union of American Republics, created in 1890 during the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C. Today, it operates through a large number of agencies and institutions throughout the Hemisphere, all contributing to the objectives of preserving the peace and security of the member states and promoting, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development. The central and permanent organ, the General Secretariat of the OAS, has its headquarters in Washington, D.C.